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"The perfection of the senses as ministers to thought must be one of the first cares of the teacher."

SRI AUROBINDO

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The Advent

The Mother's love to her children is without limit and she bears patiently with the defects of their nature. Try to be the true child of the Mother.

SRI AUROBINDO

The ADVENT

November, 1957

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If you remember what you have given to the Divine, He will have no need of remembering it Himself; and if you ever mention the gift or speak of it to anybody, it is not to the Divine that you have made the offering but to the demon of your vanity.

THE MOTHER

Vol. XIV. No. 4 November, 1957

THE ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

THE STORY OF LOVE (II)

(1)

Love for the Divine means an exclusive attachment to the divine Reality. This concentration finds its culmination in an integral identification and is instrumental to the supramental realisation upon earth.

Love alone is capable of putting an end to the suffering of the world. Only the ineffable delight of love in its essence can wipe out of the universe the burning pain of separation. For it is only in the ecstasy of the supreme union that creation will discover the reason of its existence and its fulfilment.

It is this marvellous state that we wish to realise upon earth. It is this that will be able to transform the world, make of it a dwelling place worthy of the divine Presence. And then only Love, true and pure, will incarnate in a body that will no longer be a disguise or a veil. That is why no effort is too arduous, no austerity too rigorous to illumine, perfect, transform the physical substance so that it no more hides the Divine, when

* Based on the Mother's Talks

the Divine takes an external form through Love. For, then there will be freely manifested in the world that marvellous divine Kindness that can change life into a paradise of the sweetest delight.

The Divine Love is there with all its intensity, with all its tremendous power. But most people do not feel anything. What they feel is exclusively proportionate to what they are and what they are capable of receiving.

Just imagine that you are bathed in an atmosphere wholly vibrant with divine love. But you perceive nothing of it. Sometimes, rarely, all on a sudden you get the impression of something. Then you say : "Oh ! Divine Love came to me !" It may seem to be an illusion, but the simple thing is that for some reason or other you were open just a little and you perceived the Thing. But it is always there.

The Divine Consciousness also means the same thing. This too is there in its full intensity. Yet people do not perceive it or perceive only spasmodically. But at one moment you happen to be in a good condition, you feel something and say : "Oh ! the Divine Consciousness appeared to me". But, as I said, it is not quite that. When you have a small opening, sometimes even like that of a pinhead, it rushes into you, for it is an active atmosphere. Whenever there is a possibility of its being received, it is received.

It is the same thing with regard to all divine things. They are all there.

Only you do not receive them, because you are closed up, blocked up. And you are very actively occupied with other things all the while. All the while you are full of yourself. As you are full of yourself, there is no place for the Divine. But He is there.

All wonderful things are there around you. You do not see them, or see them sometimes only, at a moment when you are a little more receptive, or perhaps in sleep, when you are less exclusively occupied with your little affairs. Then a light comes to you of something; you see, you feel something. But generally, as soon as you wake up, all that is obliterated by the formidable ego that is full of itself.

If you look at yourself closely you will see that it is always like that. Your vision of the universe is this that you are at the centre and the universe is around you. It is not the universe that you see but you see yourself in the universe. So there is no room for any other thing.

The surest means of reestablishing the right perspective is to give yourself to the Divine. Then you are obliged to come out of yourself a little at least to begin with.

Generally, when people think of the Divine, the first thing they do is to pull as much as they can and they receive nothing. They tell you : "Oh, I have called, I have prayed and I have had no answer". If they are asked : "Have you offered yourself ?", they reply : "No, I have pulled". "But that is why you have not received." It is not that the answer did not come. But when you pull, you are so much shut up within your ego that you raise a wall between what is to be received and yourself. You confine yourself within a prison and you are astonished that in your prison you feel nothing.

Throw yourself out of yourself. Give yourself without holding back anything, simply for the joy of the self-giving. Then there is a chance of your feeling something.

When you do not ask whether you are loved or you are not loved, when you are absolutely indifferent to that, then only there is the beginning of true love.

You love because you love, not because you receive an answer to your love, or because the other person loves you. You love because you cannot do otherwise than love. You do not pay any attention to what may arrive. You are perfectly satisfied with your feeling of love. You love because you love. All other thing is bargaining, it is not love.

Besides, it is sure and certain that as soon as you are truly in love, you do not put the question any more. It is so childish, ridiculous and insignificant to put the question. As soon as you are truly in love, you have the entire plenitude of delight and realisation. You do not need any kind of answer. You are the Love. That is all. You have the full satisfaction of love. And there is no need of reciprocity.

(2)

"To become conscious of the Divine Love, you must abandon all other love". What is the best way of rejecting "the other love" which is so obstinate in its denial and which does not leave you easily ?

To pass through—yes, pas through and see what is behind, not to stop at the appearance, not to rest satisfied with the external form, but to look for the principle that is behind the love, not to be satisfied until you have found the source of the feeling in you. Then the external form will fall away of itself and you will be in contact with the Divine Love that

is behind everything. That is the best way. To try to reject one to find the other is very difficult, almost impossible. Because human nature is so limited, so full of contradictions and so exclusive in its movements that if you want to reject love in its lower form, that is to say, human love as human beings feel it, if you force yourself towards rejecting that, then generally you reject even the capacity to feel love and you become as it were a stone. Then sometimes you have to wait years or even centuries for the capacity of receiving and manifesting love to reawaken in you.

Therefore the best means is, when love comes in any form whatsoever, to try to pierce through its external appearance, to find out the divine principle that is behind and that is the cause of its existence. Naturally it is full of snares and difficulties, but it is the most effective. In other words, instead of ceasing to love, because you love in the wrong way, you must cease to love in the wrong way and try to love in the right way. For example, the love between human creatures, in all its forms, the love of the parents for their children, of the children for their parents, the love between brothers, between lovers, all are tainted with ignorance and egoism and every other fault that is the common human fault. So, instead of ceasing altogether to love, which is besides very difficult, as it will simply dry up the heart and therefore serve no purpose, you must learn to love with devotion and self-giving and self-abnegation, you are to fight not against love itself but against its deformities. All forms of monopolising, the sense of possession, jealousy, all feelings that accompany these root feelings are to be rejected. Instead you must not seek to possess, dominate, impose your will or caprice or desire, must not be eager to take and receive, but to give, do not demand a return from the other, but be satisfied with your own love, do not seek your interest, your personal pleasure, the fulfilment of your own desire but rest content with your love and affection, do not ask for an answer, but remain happy with loving only, nothing more.

If you have done that, you have taken a big step, and then through that attitude, little by little you may progress more into the feeling itself, and you will find one day that love is not a personal thing, love is a divine universal feeling that manifests through you as well as it can but it is in its essence a divine thing.

The first step then is to cease to be egoistic. It is the same rule for all, not only for those who want to do Yoga, but even in ordinary life, if you want to love truly, first of all you must not love yourself and particularly do not love in an egoistic way; you must give yourself to the object of your

love without asking for anything in return. This is the very elementary discipline, if you are to transcend yourself, and live a life that is not wholly commonplace.

In Yoga, you add something more. It is, as I have said, the will to pierce through this limited and human form of love and discover the principle of Divine Love that is there behind; it is there then that you are sure to arrive at a result. That is better than drying up one's heart. It is more difficult perhaps, but it is the better in any way, because, by doing so, you do not make others suffer egoistically, you leave others to their own movements, you concern yourself with your own transformation, without imposing your will upon others and that, even in ordinary life, is a step towards something that is a little higher and more harmonious.

TO THE CHILDREN OF THE ASHRAM

You say it is obvious that evolution has a goal and that it cannot stop here or now. It seems to you obvious because you have read Sri Aurobindo's books. But if you take anybody you meet in the street and ask him what is the purpose of the universe or of the evolution, you will see that he will answer by saying that he knows nothing about it. Even here there are many, perhaps hundreds, if you ask them individually not to repeat what they have read but to say what they feel and think by themselves about the question, what is the intention behind the universal evolution or if there is any intention at all, they will not be able to give a better answer. I do not think that there are many who will be able to tell you in all sincerity, "It is like this, it is like that, it is evident etc., etc.". A good number may be able to quote passages from Sri Aurobindo; otherwise, if you cease thinking, thinking with what you have read or heard, if you try to express your own personal experience, would you have any certitude to declare ? I do not speak of the result of what you have learnt, what you have read or heard about, I speak of your own personal experience, exclusively genuinely your own, something that is evident because it is your life and realisation. Are you capable of anything of that kind ?

If you have an experience of the kind, I shall be glad to congratulate you and say that you have not wasted your time here.

Let us then look within ourselves.

NOLINI KANTA GUPTA

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM

VAIN, they have said, is the anguish of man
and his labour diurnal,
Vainly his caravans cross through the desert of
Time to the Eternal.
Thick and persistent the Night confronts
all his luminous longings,
Dark is Death's sickle that mows like a harvest
his hosts and his throngings.

Even if all life has failed, must it therefore be
failure for ever ?
Are not the ages before us still for a greater
endeavour ?
Have we not Beauty around in a dangerous
world enthralling,
Courage inciting our steps and Thought to
infinity calling?

SRI AUROBINDO

(*A duck with golden wings; it has a shining silvery colour.*)

The duck is the symbol of the soul; silvery colour, the spiritual consciousness; golden wings, the power of the Divine Truth.

* *

(*A golden circle; at the centre of it there is a small green round which is shining.*)

The green is the emotional vital, the golden circle is the higher Truth. The former has not its original light when it is only transmitted through the mind, but a light can still be there in the emotional being.

12-3-1934

* *

(*A number of circles intersecting each other around one circle. Lights of various kinds at the intersecting points.*

After a time the circles are seen differently arranged; one within the other.)

Both of these are probably representations of different parts of the being with forces playing in them.

* *

(*A big white circle. It has a smaller black circle within it and that black one has a white circle at its centre. The big circle and the smaller circle at the centre*

are full of white light. Four rays of light pass from the smaller circle through the black circle and touch the circumference of the outer big circle. These rays are projected in the form of a Cross.)

The centre of course is the Divine Centre where there is the eternal Light.

The four Rays forming a cross are the symbol of the Transcendent (upper bar), the Universal (cross bar) and the Individual (lower bar).

The circle is the enlightened ordinary consciousness, enlightened without a direct contact with the centre, receiving the rays and joining the Transcendent, the Individual and the Cosmic together only through the darkness of the black circle.

The black circle is the part between the human consciousness and the Divine (above human mind, below the supreme consciousness). It is superconscient to Man, therefore to the human mind a darkness, because the human mind has no access to it; when this part becomes conscient and luminous in the human being, then the full connection can be made.

* *

(*OM in the sun.*)

The experience of the Brahman in the light of the Truth.

31-3-1934

* *

(*A circle. The upper and the lower portions of the globe are covered with blue light, the rest is full of white light.*)

White light is the Mother's consciousness, blue is the spiritual mind or higher mind. But it is not clear what the circle indicates as the circle is a quite general symbol.

7-1-1937

* *

(*Number of circles, one within another. The inmost circle is shining with other circles spinning round it. The outermost circle emits rays.*)

That is a way of representing the different parts or planes of the consciousness in a concentric way, that is as rings around the psychic, instead of in an ascending scale upward from the subconscient to the highest.

30-3-1934

* *

(*Figure* 8.)

It is not clear, but it seems to have some reference to complete perfection in the creation (double 4=8).

30-3-1934

* *

(*The Mother sitting on her seat. A cobra with many hoods behind her covering the head. It has a shining golden colour; in the centre of each hood a shining red round spot.*)

The cobra is an emblem of Nature-Energy; Golden=the higher Truth-Nature; many hoods=many powers. Red is probably a sign of Mahakali power. The cobra covering the head with its hoods is a symbol of sovereignty.

23-1-1937

* *

(*A man climbing up the mountain.*)

It is, I suppose, an image of the upward ascent in the physical consciousness.

4-7-1934

* *

(*A triangle; a smaller triangle within on the same base. A vertical line joining the apex of the bigger triangle to the base passing through the apex of the inner triangle.*)

It signifies the lower nature contained in the higher with a connection through their summits to the base.

* *

(*A rectangle with a semi-circle inside; both have blue colour. In the semi-circle is a smaller white shining circle with the standing figure of a man.*)

The soul in the higher mind (blue) with something of the light of the divine consciousness at the centre.

* *

(*Instead of Light, a darkness was coming down on the earth. Does darkness also descend on earth like Light?*)

Can't say.
Perhaps it means Hitler and the control of the vital forces over earth!

GENERAL

(*Does electric light lessen attacks of sex forces at night?*)

Attacks can come in the daylight or in night, so they can come in electric light also. It is only the inner light that discourages attacks though it may not entirely prevent them unless there is the Force also.

2-1-1935

* *

(*How to guard against insincerity in the subconscious vital?*)

It can only be dangerous if the waking mind accepts it. All the same,

so long as it remains in the subconscient, it keeps a seed of possibility—so it must be got out altogether.

5-3-1934

* *

(*During sleep I go to my native place though I do not think of it during the waking hours.*)

What comes in dream and is not felt in the waking hours, is obviously from the subsconscious.

5-3-1934

* *

The true vital consciousness is one in which the vital makes full surrender, converts itself into an instrument of the Divine, making no demand, insisting on no desire, answering to the Mother's force and to no other, calm, unegoistic, giving an absolute loyalty and obedience, with no personal vanity or ambition, only asking to be a pure and perfect instrument desiring nothing for itself but that the Truth may prevail within itself and everywhere and the Divine Victory take place and the Divine Work be done.

* *

(*You write: 'The child need not be miserable but simply come back when the Mother calls'. What does it mean exactly? Does it mean that one has only to remain in the Ashram with the Mother?*)

No, it is not enough to be in the Ashram; one has to open to the Mother and put away the mind which one was playing with in the world.

* *

(*I tried to feel Mother in the heart; but did not succeed and wanted to be miserable; I did not succeed in that either.*)

It is no use being miserable or trying to be miserable. These things are simply movements of the vital. Aspiration and sincerity are what are wanted.

25-9-1934

* *

(*Do the planes of consciousness move around the psychic and do they get enlightened as they approach it?*)

Ordinarily the psychic is seen as behind the other centres supporting them; but as the planes spread on all sides of the centres the circle arrangement is also valid. But they do not get near the psychic, they open to it.

31-3-1934

* *

(*When the nature-part comes forward then one feels lost and imperfect. The happy feeling of purity and inner contentment disappears. How to meet the situation?*)

If the imperfection is there, one has to see it. The thing to be done is to live in the inner self and from there see the imperfection and change it.

31-3-1934

* *

(*What is the nature and quality of the illumined vital?*)

It is in contact with the Divine Power or the higher Truth and seeks to transform itself and become a true instrument—it rejects the ordinary vital movements.

18-1-1934

* *

(*I have a sisterly feeling for women and feel secure that the lower nature will no more arise. I feel safe.*)

It is not always safe to feel safe—one has to be on one's guard till the safety becomes a reality.

18-1-1934

* *

(*When I try to meditate in the presence of the Mother, there is always a disturbing rush of thoughts as to what she is bringing down etc.*)

It is simply a bad habit of the mind, a wrong activity. It is not in the least useful for the mind to ask or try to determine what the Mother wills or is bringing—that only interferes. It has simply to remain quiet and concentrated and leave the Power to act.

11-1-1934

* *

(*How to get a pure and complete devotion?*)

Get quiet first—then from the quietude aspire and open yourself quietly and sincerely to the Mother.

15-11-1933

* *

(*Free me from the ego and lift me out of the lower nature.*)

Open to the wideness which is above you and let it descend.

11-12-1933

* *

(*Attachment to parents*)

The attachement to parents belongs to the ordinary physical nature —it has nothing to do with Divine Love.

23-4-1934

* *

(*I seem to prefer a condition of struggle to a condition of satisfaction. Is that all right?*)

One should be satisfied with what on gets and still aspire quietly without struggle, for more—till all has come. No desire, no struggle—aspiration, faith, openness—and the grace.

9-12-1933

* *

(*Am I right in my idea that without being great one cannot do Yoga?*)

Of course you can. There is no need of being great. On the contrary humility is the first necessity, for one who has ego and pride cannot realise the Highest.

13-6-1934

* *

(*Are true vital consciousness and transformation of the vital the same?*)

The getting into the true vital consciousness is one stage of the transformation.

15-9-1935

* *

(*What is the meaning of not retaining vital relations with others?*)

It is meant that you should have the relation of sadhaks with each other, one of good will and friendly feeling, but not any special relation of a vital character. If there is any one you cannot meet without such a vital relation coming up, then only it is not advisable to meet him or her.

6-9-1938

* *

(*What should I do to be fit for the divine habitation?*)

Only to reject all that comes in the way and keep a single minded aspiration.

10-9-1934

* *

(*The sadhak feels alone and suffers when he does not have the Mother's presence. Does the embodied Mother feel the absence of her child as the human mother does? Or is he more miserable than the human for the reason that she cannot express her feeling as openly as the human mother?*)

If that were the case the Mother would have to be in a profound state of millionfold misery all the time—for why should she be miserable only for the sadhaks ? Why not for each soul that is wandering in the Ignorance ? The child need not be miserable but simply come back when the Mother calls.

24-9-1934

* *

(*I am shy of women. I have a contempt for them.*)

If that is your feeling about woman the sooner you get rid of it the

better—for it is very silly. As for shyness etc. it should be got rid of, but do not replace it by familiarity or over intimacy.

12-1-1934

* *

(*What is to be done when the lower movements assail?*)

There must be utter rejection, silence or descent of the higher Prakriti from above.

21-4-1934

* *

THE TEACHING OF SRI AUROBINDO (3)

The Divine Mother

THE Supreme Reality is One, Indescribable. But when preceived as related to manifestation, It reveals itself as a Being, an Existent with a supreme Consciousness. The Consciousness is inherent, it is in fact the very nature of the Being. It is not merely an awareness of itself; it is a Consciousness that is at once self-aware and all-aware. It is instinct with a dynamis; it is the Power of the Divine Being. From the immensity of the Being, Brahman, it manifests myriad Names and Forms, measures out finites from the depths of the Infinite, shapes the Many out of the One,—it is the Maya. She is the Shakti by whom the One Conscious Being, the Sole Purusha effects a manifold purposive Creation.[1] Not only does She manifest from what is contained in the Being of the Lord, Ishwara, but She continues to direct, lead and rule over what is so brought into creation; She is the Ishwari.

The Divine Being and the Consciousness-Force, the Purusha and the Shakti are not two different, separate realities. Indeed, the Consciousness-Force is the Being itself as Consciousness-Force. They are two statuses of the same Divine Reality when It manifests. There is a mutuality in their relation, a oneness of being in the Supreme Truth. The Divine Being is the Lord, He who originates and presides; His Consciousness-Force is She the supreme Shakti, the Executrix who holds in herself the truth of His creative poise and effectuates His Intention. She manifests; He is the manifested. Without Her He is unmanifest; without Him She does not exist.

This is a fundamental truth that governs the entire Creation with whatever variations in form. This nexus of Being and Force, Purusha and Shakti, is the axis round which all Movement revolves. All exists potentially in the Being; it is brought out and poured into actuality by the Shakti,

[1] *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad* VI. 8.

the Conscious Force that is the inherent Power of the Being. It is thus that this sevenfold Existence, that is the present Creation, has been brought into manifestation from out of the Being of the Lord by His Divine Shakti. She holds the Truths to be manifested, releases them in Her creative movement and proceeds to work out their expression in accord with the Will and the basis of the Sanction of the Supreme Lord; it is thus that She is active on each level of the Manifestation, in each unit of Creation.

All movements, all activities are ultimately realised to be segments or expressions of Her One Movement which in this universe is directed towards the fulfilment of the Divine Will in Creation by leading it from out of the primal Darkness of Nescience towards the revealing Light of Knowledge. The labour is aeonic, endless, but it is an imperative in Her for She is the Creatrix, the Mother of All—*etad yonini bhūtani sarvāni.*[1] She forms and puts out several Powers, Emanations and Embodiments of Herself for the effectuation of Her purpose; so too She manifests the Godheads from the Being of the Ishwara. She even consents to descend Herself into this world of Ignorance, Falsehood and Suffering, at crucial junctures in its evolutionary career, so that She might with Her direct, undelegated Power of Consciousness and Force execute the Supreme Intention. Such an hour, says Sri Aurobindo, is now. The Divine Shakti who has been toiling since the beginnings of Creation is now on the terrestrial scene, physically present, to lead it to its consummation, to turn life on earth into an efflorescence of the Divine felicities. She is the embodied Mother of whom he announces, "The One whom we adore as the Mother is the Divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence."

II

Such then, is the Divine Creatrix, the Supreme Mother of All who, in the words of the Vedic Seer, commences and pervades all the worlds, extends herself far beyond the Heavens and far beneath the Earth, permeates and possesses the manifold Existence, She by whose sole Power all breathes and lives, She whose origin is in the Waters of the Inner Ocean (*antaḥ samudra*), the profounds of the Infinite.[2]

[1] *Gita* VII. 5-6.
[2] *Rig Veda* X. 125

She is at work. Whether in the individual or in the universe, it is this Para Shakti that is multiply active with her innate Knowledge and Will.[1] In his ignorance man is not aware of Her presence, misses Her direction and takes to his meandering course. To the Yogin who seeks to realise the truth of existence, to fulfil in himself the divine purpose in manifestation, as in this Yoga, it is incumbent that he awakens to Her and learns to open and surrender himself to the workings of Her Force for the accomplishment of what is indeed a task super-human.

For, here the aim is not only to seek liberation from the Ignorance of Nature and attain to the freedom of the soul—a direct undertaking which though difficult in itself is yet realisable by concentrated human *tapasyā* as a result of past spiritual effort in humanity. It is much more. It is a complex endeavour beyond the normal means of the individual. This is a Path not only of liberation, but also of perfection. It is not only the soul that is to gain its freedom into the Spirit but equally the other members of man's being, his whole instrumental nature as well. Each part of him, not the soul alone, is divine in essence. Every individual formation of the evolving spirit in man, his soul, his mind, his emotional part, his life-dynamism, his physical frame and all else that goes with him, should be capable of participating in the realisations of the Yoga, uplifted and steadily transformed into the Higher Nature of the manifesting Godhead.

The question is not individual alone, it is linked with the larger problem of the collectivity. Man lives in society, amidst his fellow-beings, and is necessarily subject to the action of the forces and movements that are current in the universe. One cannot live all by himself even if he would; one has to front and meet the contacts of the world, react to them with outflowings from his own being. It is inevitable that in this interchange there is an infiltration, if not an invasion, into his life by the normally unregenerate movements in the environment resulting in a constant dilution of whatever laborious gains he might have made in his inner life. There is a constant, disabling friction between the two different states of consciousness. The only solution is one in which both the claim of the individual and the demand of the collectivity, will stand reconciled each contributing to the growth and perfection of the other. It lies in the evolution and establishment of a harmonising Principle of Knowledge-Power higher than any now functioning in the terrestrial Existence. In

[1] *Svet. Up.* VI. 8

a word, it is to bring about the manifestation of the Truth-Light, the Vijnana, the next inevitable step in the ladder of cosmic evolution,—the Power of Gnosis to which are pointed all the potencies of the Mind so far developed and which holds in its plenary Knowledge the key to the riddles that have baffled the limited human mind and has also the necessary Force of Will to actualise its Vision. And this Knowledge-Will, the Supramental Power as it is termed by Sri Aurobindo, is there in the higher hierarchies of Existence above this triple world of Ignorance, as a direct formulation of the Divine Shakti. And naturally it is only She who can manifest this glorious Self-Power of Hers for the greater glory of the Divine Creation.

III

Coming closer to the question of the individual, what is the nature of the perfection that is aimed at ? The perfection envisaged in this Teaching is of an integral character. The soul which is the centre of the individual manifestation of the Divine passes from birth to birth, developing each time a particular line or lines of the potentialities with which it is endowed. This spark from the Divine grows with the experiences so gathered, assimilates their essence and forms an individuality of its own; it puts forward a representative projection of itself in Nature, what we call personality, a configuration of the power or powers of the soul within. This soul is to develop into a full image of the Divinity of whom it is a delegate in terrestrial evolution; the spark is to grow into a Flame of the Spirit. And the soul-personality is likewise intended to manifest the increasing perfection built up within.

There are four broad Cosmic Principles in existence which seek expression in the developmment of the human personality. They are the Powers of Knowledge, Strength, Harmony and Work, the four aspects of the Cosmic Movement imaged in the fourfold manifestation of the Universal Spirit, Virat Purusha, in the Veda.[1] Man has in him the elements of each of these though in an inchoate manner. There is a side which thinks, seeks to know and grasp, arrives at a certain understanding and always tries to better that knowledge. There is another side which exerts itself to enforce what it knows, a will and power of effectuation.

[1] *Rg Veda* X. 90. 12

It asserts itself to dissolve obstructions and spends its strength to achieve its objective. There is a third which is concerned with regulation of things within oneself, his thoughts, his movements and his personal output of self-force in whatever direction, and of things outside i.e. in the environment with which he has dealings. He adapts himself, seeks to organise the means at his disposal or at the disposal of others for his individual as well as the common good and generally strives to arrive at a balance of mutuality in relations—harmony. Then there is in him a part which is occupied with work, which puts out energy for construction, creation in the external field of life. These are the four soul-powers embodied in each individual, naturally, not all equally manifest, but are there some less and some more pronounced. According to the predominant stress in his nature man is known for his capacity of knowledge and intellect, of hero-power and strength of will, of adaptibility, organisation and possession, of labour and Service. The richer the personality that is developed, the larger and more coordinated is the expression of all these powers. Indeed, for a fuller growth of any of these powers it is absolutely necessary that the others too helpfully develop. And for a fullfledged blossoming of the Soul into an ideal Personality a rounded perfection in all these four directions is indispensable. Doubtless, this is a task beyond the limited range of human effort. And if left to Nature it would take centuries or millenniums for the consummation.

Here too, Sri Aurobindo declares, it is the Divine Mother who renders possible this perfection in the human personality. For answering to the need of evolving humanity, She has manifested Herself in four of her outstanding Personalities which are active in creation for the organisation, development and perfection of these very powers of the Cosmic Godhead. These are the great Names—Maheshwari, the Goddess of Imperial Wisdom in whose trail open out splendours of Knowledge, Mahakali whose is the Strength that brooks no obstacle and whose the Will that effectuates the Truth of Knowledge, Mahalakshmi, She from whom flow spontaneities of Beauty, Joy and Harmony, and lastly Mahasaraswati who presides over the detail of execution and the labour of perfection. These are the Powers of the Divine Mother which are manifest in the cosmic field and which could be made immediately active and living in the person of the individual in the measure of his self-opening and receptivity to Her Workings. The seeker of the integral Divine aspires and gives himself, his conscious being, and puts a will on all that is not yet conscious in him, to surrender itself

to the Divine Mother so that She could respond and through these Personalities successfully work out in him the difficult Sadhana,—the manifold and intricate labour of the correction of his recalcitrant elements, the development, coordination and an integrated expression of the fourfold soul-force that constitutes the perfected human personality.

M. P. PANDIT

You must not only see the Mother in dream but learn to see and feel her with you and within you at all times.

SRI AUROBINDO

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE PROBLEM OF WORLD PEACE

(Continued from last issue)

IT is significant that Sri Aurobindo's luminous mind views the problem of human unity and peace in the dual background of general evolutionary scheme of Nature whose highest creation so far is man and of the factual course of human history in the East as well as the West all through the ages. Nay, the eye of the illumined seer clearly sees that Nature is but gradually working out ceaselessly as well as 'complexly' some secret conscious Will hidden in her bosom through the manifold and diverse chapters of human history across all these centuries. And one who can keep his vision steady on this secret conscious will which is being worked out by the instrumentality of Nature through the materials of human history can clearly perceive how humanity is being inevitably led towards the goal of unity and peace. The path has neither been easy nor straightforward. There have been many stumblings, manœuvrings, turnings and lapses. Several times it has so happened that the clock has been quite put back. Political, military, economic, even cultural ambitions have nearly always stood in the way of human unity and peace. Threats of war and the mad race for armaments and the defensive strategy of military pacts and alliances, all of which are becoming more and more threatening and terrible as years roll on bringing the rich resources of destructive science into the arena of active political operations, seem today as never before to drive the chances of the establishment of peace and brotherhood far into the background. And yet the luminous vision of Sri Aurobindo with regard to the secretly working out of Nature's eventual scheme is unshaken and firm as rock, as is clear from the pages of his radiant book *The Ideal of Human Unity*. Strange but no doubt sure and steady are the ways of Nature. Says Sri Aurobindo : "The emergence of an ideal in human thought is always the sign of an intention in Nature, but not always of an intention to accomplish ; sometimes it indicates only an at-

tempt which is predestined to temporary failure. For Nature is slow and patient in her methods. She takes up ideas and half carries them out, then drops them by the wayside to resume them in some future era with a better combination. She tempts humanity, her thinking instrument, and tests how far it is ready for the harmony she has imagined ; she allows and invites man to attempt and fail, so that he may learn and succeed better, another time. Still, the ideal having once made its way to the front of thought, must certainly be attempted, and this ideal of human unity is likely to figure largely among the determining forces of the future ; for the intellectual and material circumstances of the age have prepared and almost impose it, specially the scientific discoveries which have made our earth so small that its vastest kingdoms seem now no more than the provinces of a single country."

The basic fact being so, Sri Aurobindo does not at all feel discouraged or discomfited by the recrudescence of militant, aggressive psychology among nations and political leaders and the resultant fighting and killing at frequent intervals of human history. On the contrary, he thinks that "the military necessity, the pressure of war between nations and the need for prevention of war by the assumption of force and authority in the hands of an international body, world-state or Federation or League of Peace, is that which will most directly drive humanity in the end towards some sort of international union." Sri Aurobindo made this observation as as early as 1919 when *The Ideal of Human Unity* was printed in book form for the first time. And we find that today this is what is actually happening in the world. Sri Aurobindo's fundamental stand, however, with regard to this apparently intractable problem of peace and unity is on the working of Nature, and he is undoubtedly inspired by the vision of a great truth when he says: "Unity is an idea which is not at all arbitrary or unreal; for unity is the very basis of existence. The oneness that is secretly at the foundation of all things, the evolving spirit in Nature is moved to realise consciously at the top; the evolution moves through diversity, from a simple to a complex oneness. Unity the race moves towards and must one day realise."

After discussing in course of the book the various possibilities and forms of the way in which this natural ideal of unity can be realized in the human race, Sri Aurobindo comes to the following constructive conclusion :—

"While it is possible to construct a precarious and quite mechanical unity by political and administrative means, the unity of the human race, even if achieved, can only be secured and can only be made real if the religion of humanity, which is at present the highest active ideal of mankind, spiritualises itself and becomes the general inner law of human life.

The outward unity may well achieve itself—possibly...in a measurable time,—because that is the inevitable final trend of the working of Nature in human society which makes for larger and yet larger aggregations and cannot fail to arrive at a total aggregation of mankind in a closer international system.

This working of Nature depends for its means of fulfilment upon two forces which combine to make the larger aggregation inevitable. First, there is the increasing closeness of common interests or at least the interlacing and interrelation of interests in a larger and yet larger circle which makes old divisions an obstacle and a cause of weakness, obstruction and friction, and the clash and collision that comes out of this friction a ruinous calamity to all, even to the victor who has to pay a too heavy price for his gains, and even these expected gains, as war becomes more complex and disastrous, are becoming more and more difficult to achieve and the success problematical. An increasing perception of this community or interrelation of interests and a growing unwillingness to face the consequences of collision and ruinous struggle must push men to welcome any means for mitigating the divisions which lead to such disasters. If the trend to the mitigation of divisions is once given a definite form, that commences an impetus which drives towards closer and closer union. If she cannot arrive by these means, if the incoherence is too great for the trend of unification to triumph, Nature will use other means, such as war and conquest or the temporary domination of a powerful state or empire or the menace of such a domination which will compel those threatened to adopt a closer system of union. It is these means and this force of outward necessity which she used to create nation-units and national empires, and, however modified in the circumstances and workings, it is at bottom the same force and the same means which she is using to drive mankind towards international unification.

But, secondly, there is the force of a common uniting sentiment. This may work in two ways; it may come before as an originating or contributory cause or it may come afterwards as a cementing result. In the first case, the sentiment of a larger unity springs up among units which were pre-

viously divided and leads them to seek after a form of union which may then be brought about principally by the force of the sentiment and its idea or by that secondarily as an aid to other and more outward events and causes. We may note that in earlier times this sentiment was insufficiently effective, as among the petty clan or regional nations; unity had ordinarily to be effected by outward circumstances and generally by the grossest of them, by war and conquest, by the domination of the most powerful among many warring or contiguous peoples. But in later times, the force of the sentiment of unity, supported as it has been by a clearer political idea, has become more effective...we may say, then, that this trend must eventually realise itself, however great may be the difficulties."

I have quoted him here at some length just to show how his strong, unshaken vision of the peaceful unity of mankind is not the product of any romantically idealised imagination or moral and religious day dreaming or wish fulfilment. It is rooted deep in the sober facts of the general evolutionary law of Nature as well as those of actual human history.

There are two significantly remarkable aspects of this problem, as seen by Sri Aurobindo. Firstly, he lays a great emphasis on the psychological and spiritual change of human nature if the ideal of human unity is to prove a sound and effective reality; and secondly, his ideal of unity is not at all a thing of simple but multiple and diverse oneness. For these things, too, his guiding light is Nature herself, even if she appears paradoxical in her ways to our unenlightened intelligence. We find, for example, says Sri Aurobindo, that "freedom is as necessary to life as law and regime; diversity is as necessary as unity to our true completeness. Existence is only one in its essence and totality, in its play it is necessarily multiform. Absolute uniformity would mean the cessation of life, while, on the other hand, the vigour of the pulse of life may be measured by the richness of the diversities which it creates. At the same time, while diversity is essential for power and fruitfulness of life, unity is necessary for its order, arrangement and stability. Unity we must create, but not necessarily uniformity. If man could realise a perfect spiritual unity, no sort of uniformity would be necessary; for the utmost play of diversity would be securely possible on that foundation. If again he could realise a secure, clear, firmly-held unity in the principle, a rich, even an unlimited diversity in its application might be possible without any fear of disorder, confusion or strife."

Thus the two strong and stable pillars on which the age-old cherished

dream of peace and harmony can be concretely constructed are the principles of perfect spiritual unity and multiform, even unlimited diversity i.e. principles which apparently appear to be contradictory to, but are in reality complementary of, each other.

Uniformity, according to Sri Aurobindo, can never be the true basis of unity, for uniformity is not the law of life itself. "Life exists by diversity; it insists that every group, every being shall be, even while one with all the rest in its universality, yet by some principle or ordered detail of variation unique....Order is indeed the law of life, but not an artificial regulation. The sound order is that which comes from within, as the result of a nature that has discovered and found its own law and the law of its relations with others. Therefore, the truest order is that which is founded on the greatest possible liberty; for liberty is at once the condition of vigorous variation and the condition of self-finding. Nature secures variation by division into groups and insists on liberty by the force of individuality in the members of the group. Therefore the unity of the human race to be entirely sound and in consonance with the deepest laws of life must be founded on free groupings, and the groupings again must be the natural association of free individuals."

But liberty by itself is not enough, for our articulate aim since the 18th century at least has been "to recreate human society in the image of three kindred ideas, liberty, equality and fraternity". Without a harmonious development of such a trinity on an international scale our ideal of human unity will continue to remain an insubstantial dream. Unfortunately, however, human history shows that none of these three basic ideals has really been won in spite of all the progress that has been achieved. "The liberty", for example, "that has been so much proclaimed as an essential of modern progress is an outward and mechanical and unreal liberty. The equality that has been so much sought and battled for is equally an outward and mechanical and will turn out to be an unreal equality. Fraternity is not even claimed to be a practicable principle of the ordering of life and what is put forward as its substitute is the outward and mechanical principle of equal association or at the best a comradeship of labour. This is because the idea of humanity has been obliged in an intellectual age to mask its true character of a religion and a thing of the soul and the spirit and to appeal to the vital and physical mind of man rather than his inner being...it has worked at the machinery of human life and on the outer mind much more than upon the soul of the race. It has laboured to establish

a political, social and legal liberty, equality and mutual help in an equal association."

"But", continues Sri Aurobindo, "though these aims are of great importance in their own field, they are not the central thing; they can only be secure when founded upon a change of the inner human nature and inner way of living; they are themselves of importance only as means for giving a greater scope and a better field for man's development towards that change and, when it is once achieved, as an outward expression of the larger inward life". What is to be particularly recognised in this connection, says Sri Aurobindo, is that "Freedom, equality, brotherhood are the three godheads of the soul; they cannot be really achieved through the external machinery of society or by man so long as he lives only in the individual and the communal ego. When the ego claims liberty, it arrives at competitive individualism. When it asserts equality, it arrives first at strife, then at an attempt to ignore the variations of Nature, and, as the sole way of doing that successfully, it constructs an artificial and machine made society. A society that pursues liberty as its ideal is unable to achieve equality; a society that aims at equality will be obliged to sacrifice liberty. For the ego to speak of fraternity is for it to speak of something contrary to its nature. All that it knows is association for the pursuit of common egoistic ends and the utmost that it can arrive at is a closer organization for the equal distribution of labour, production, consumption and enjoyment.

Yet is brotherhood the real key to the triple gospel of the ideal of humanity. The union of liberty and equality can only be achieved by the power of human brotherhood and it cannot be founded on anything else. But brotherhood exists only in the soul and by the soul; it can exist by nothing else. For this brotherhood is not a matter either of physical kinship or of vital association or of intellectual agreement. When the soul claims freedom, it is the freedom of its self-development, the self-development of the divine in man in all his being. When it claims equality, what it is claiming is that freedom equally for all and the recognition of the same soul, the same godhead in all human beings. When it strives for brotherhood, it is founding that equal freedom of self-development on a common aim, a common life, a unity of mind and feeling founded upon the recognition of this inner spiritual unity. These three things are in fact the nature of the soul; for freedom, equality, unity are the eternal attributes of the spirit. It is the practical recognition of this truth, it is the awakening of the soul in man and the attempt

to get him to live from his soul soul and not from his ego which is the inner meaning of religion, and it is that to which the religion of humanity also must arrive before it can fulfil itself in the life of the race."

Well, these are very profoundly illuminating and constructive observations, and one who has gone far beneath the surfaces of life and plumbed its depths and complex unseen forces and urges can alone discover the truths upon which these sound observations are based. But, alas ! for the modern politician, statesman, parliamentarian, economist, scientist and military general, the human soul has not only little value but hardly any existence. No doubt most of them occasionally talk of the inner change of man but what they mean by it is at best some sort of a moral and ethical change. But the soul is quite different from the moral and ethical being which is at best the purified and enlightened part of the mental being of man. The soul is different from the vital, mental and moral personalities of man and is at the very centre of his life. The self-conscious humanity has to recognise this basic fact before attempting to do anything truly effective by way of reform and change. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that Sri Aurobindo should constantly and ceaselessly draw our attention to this basic truth of our life and the still deeper truth that the ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity through which we desire to lay the foundations of peace and order in the world deep and strong, are really the attributes of the soul and it is through the spiritual process and in our spiritual life that we can first realize these great and oft-talked ideals. It is after we have achieved them in our soul and inner spiritual life that they can be effectively and stably expressed in our moral, political, economic, social and general cultural life without causing any friction, discord and violence, otherwise we shall go on quarrelling with one another for centuries in the name of these very ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity and yet remain farther from them as before. That's why, while clearly recognizing the need for political and administrative unity and co-operation as well as economic equality through the external machinery of one world-state or something like a United Nations Organization, he cannot help laying the first and the greatest emphasis on the true i.e. the spiritualised religion of humanity. Here also the cue is taken from Nature herself, that forms the outer body and structure of any organism only after she has secretly and securely discovered its soul, its own inherent law of life and growth.

There has been, no doubt, a good deal of articulate intellectual, philosophical, moral, religious and even aesthetic thinking on the religion of

humanity for the last two centuries or so. But it appears that none has been so far able to understand and express its full and deeper implications better than Sri Aurobindo. Let us attend to his reflections once again.

"The fundamental idea" behind this modern religion of humanity, says he "is that mankind is the godhead to be worshipped and served by man and that the respect, the service, the progress of the human being and human life are the chief duty and chief aim of the human spirit. No other idol, neither the nation, the state, the family, nor anything else ought to take its place; they are only worthy of respect so far as they are images of the human spirit and enshrine its presence and aid its self-manifestation. But where the cult of these idols seeks to usurp the place of the spirit and makes demands inconsistent with its service, they should be put aside. No injunctions of old creeds, religions, political, social or cultural are valid when they go against its claims. Science even, though it is one of the chief modern idols, must not be allowed to make claims contrary to its ethical temperament and aim, for science is only valuable in so far as it helps and serves by knowledge and progress the religion of humanity. War, capital punishment, the taking of human life, cruelty of all kinds whether committed by the individual, the state or society, not only physical cruelty, but moral cruelty, the degradation of any human being or any class of human beings under whatever specious plea or in whatever interest, the oppression and exploitation of man by man, of class by class, of nation by nation and all those habits of life and institutions of society of a similar kind which religion and ethics formerly tolerated or even favoured in practice, whatever they might do in their ideal rule or creed, are crimes against the religion of humanity, abominable to its ethical mind, forbidden by its primary tenets, to be fought against always, in no degree to be tolerated. Man must be sacred to man regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour, nationality, status, political or social advancement. The body of man is to be respected, made immune from violence and outrage, fortified by science against disease and preventable death. The life of man is to be held sacred, preserved, strengthened, ennobled, uplifted. The heart of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violation, from suppression, from mechanisation, freed from belittling influences. The mind of man is to be released from all bonds, allowed freedom and range and opportunity, given all its means of self-training and self-development and organised in the play of its powers for the service of humanity.

And all this too is not to be held as an abstract or pious sentiment, but given full and practical recognition in the persons of men and nations and mankind. This, speaking largely, is the idea and spirit of the intellectual religion of humanity."

We clearly see what a magnificently noble and integral conception of the religion of humanity is outlined here. And yet this is not quite sufficient, for it only brings out the intellectual aspect of this religion. For its full and unshakable growth one has to dig deeper into the spiritual roots of this religion and then one will find how the three politically-eulogised tenets of equality, liberty and fraternity form the very cornerstone of this religion, fraternity being its very keystone. A reference to this has already been made before.

It is evident, therefore, that the largeness of approach, the integrality of vision, the totality of understanding are always brought to bear in course of his book on the ideal of human unity on this vital and urgent problem of world peace. Indeed, without some such vision and approach it is impossible for us to arrive at a sober and clear-eyed and fully effective understanding of the problem before us and its solution. Also, viewing human history and human nature in close relationship with the deeper laws of evolutionary Nature, Sri Aurobindo is always realistic and balanced and has hardly any illusions about the sheer idealism of even such noble and indispensably desirable things as peace and unity. He frankly states that "if the idea of unity can appeal to the human mind, so too can the idea of separative life, for both address themselves to the vital instincts of his nature". And then he asks : "What guarantee will there be that the latter will not prevail when man has once tried unity and finds perhaps that its advantages do not satisfy his whole nature ?" His only hope lies in the fact that "only the growth of some very powerful psychological factor will make unity necessary to man, whatever other changes and manipulations might be desirable to satisfy his other needs and instincts" and we may take it that for all the discouraging factors which still continue to be present in our midst, his hope is fulfilling itself now with a deal of certitude.

Similarly, no less shrewdly realistic is his observation when he tells us that "Peace and security we all desire at present, because we have them not in sufficiency; but we must remember that man has also within him the need of combat, adventure, struggle; he almost requires these for his growth and healthy living; that instinct would be largely suppressed by a universal

peace and a flat security and it might rise up successfully against suppression. Economic well being by itself cannot permanently satisfy and the price paid for it might be so heavy as to diminish its appeal and value. The human instinct for liberty, individual and national, might well be a constant menace to the world-state, unless it so skilfully arranged its system as to give them sufficient free play."

In the same way the sober realistic observation of Sri Aurobindo does not persuade him to regard the move towards reduction of arms and armies as a very sound solution of the problem of world peace and union. To him "the limitation of armies and armaments is an illusory remedy. Even if there could be found an effective international means of control, it would cease to operate as soon as the clash of war actually came. The European conflict (i.e. the last Great War of 1914-18) has shown that, in the course of war, a country can be turned into a huge factory of arms and a nation convert its whole peaceful manhood into an army. England which started with a small and even insignificant armed force, was able in the course of a single year to raise millions of men and in two to train and equip them and throw them effectively into the balance. This object lesson is sufficient to show that the limitation of armies and armaments can only lighten the national burden in peace, leaving it by that very fact more resources for the conflict, but cannot prevent or even minimise the disastrous intensity and extension of war". Looking at the problem of war from the point of view of armies and armaments Sri Aurobindo thinks that "war can only be abolished if national armies are abolished and even then with difficulty, by the development of some other machinery which humanity does not yet know how to form, or even if formed, will not for sometime be able or willing perfectly to utilise. And there is no chance of national armies being abolished; for each nation distrusts all the others too much, has too many ambitions and hungers, needs to remain armed, if for nothing else, to guard its markets and keep down its dominions, colonies, subject peoples. Commercial ambitions and rivalries, political pride, dreams, longings, jealousies are not going to disappear as if by the touch of a magicwand....The awakening must go much deeper, lay hold upon much purer roots of action before the psychology of nations will be transmuted into that something "wondrous, rich and strange" which will eliminate war and international collisions from our distressed and stumbling human life."

Well, it is a hopeful sign that with the second world war, the awakening

of man did go deeper than before, for we find the sponsors of the famous Declaration of Unesco clearly recognising that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." This recognition is, of course, not sufficient for as we follow the historical analysis and concrete vision of Sri Aurobindo we begin to realise that more than in the minds of men wars begin in the lower, egoistic vital instincts and nerves and organs of men and that the true defences of peace can be constructed and developed only in the soul which alone knows and is capable of feeling and realising what true peace is, and not in the minds of men, which are not always even their reliable and effective instruments of either thought, knowledge, will or action. Our leaders of today all over the world must realise this fundamental fact first and reorganise their own thinking, statesmanship and mode of action accordingly and only then can the general, common humanity be psychologically as well as environmentally changed gradually so as to bring about a new era of peace and order, harmony and co-operation in the world.

But even more than this, or to be more exact, increasingly through this recognition of the soul-factor in man's individual as well as collective life and aspiration, what has to be clearly and hopefully recognised by the *élite* of today is the emergence of an entirely new and all-effectuating self-acting force and light in the world of today. It is the force and light of what Sri Aurobindo has termed as the Supermind. What this new power is and how it will act and what it will accomplish, once it begins to operate on the earth and through the agency of fully developed and conscious yogic humanity are questions which need not be entered here. The curious reader will do well to go through the last two chapters of *The Life Divine* and the whole of *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth.* But what is of infinitely assuring and encouraging importance to us is the declaration by the Mother only last year through her 24th April message that "The manifestation of the Supramental upon earth is no more a promise but a living fact, a reality.

It is at work here, and one day will come when the most blind, the most unconscious, even the most unwilling shall be obliged to recognize it."

Since then, the Mother has in so many ways, direct as well as indirect, tried to confirm to the questioners and doubters that not only the descent of the Supramental light upon the earth but its manifestation and the masterful working of its force in all earth life, though yet veiled to the physical eyes, are undeniable facts.

This, I should say, is the greatest event that has occurred in human history. It marks a complete turning point in the evolutionary life of the earth itself and it puts an end to the cycles of ignorance and incapacity through which humanity has been evolving hitherto. The question of the establishment of peace and harmony in international life has so far proved to be an insolubly baffling one, because man, even through the efforts of his highest and most spiritually enlightened representatives, has found it difficult to realize this ideal on the earth ; and it is no wonder if even some of the greatest seers and thinkers of our country like Buddha and Shankara could ultimately hold out to man the prospect of full attainment of peace and freedom and unity only in the distant, transcendental regions of absolute Silence and Bliss beyond and away from this ephemeral, illusory, entangling, Karma-bound cosmic life below. How could they have, then, discovered and stressed upon the attainment of collective peace and harmony by man here upon the earth in his Karmic existence ?

But the Supramental has the full and natural power to change the very roots of ignorance, inconscience and nescience from which the evolving nature and life of man have sprung. Today man is born out of the elements of discord, strife, separativity, egoistic individuality and so he finds it so difficult to attain full peace in all the parts of his individual nature and life, not to speak of the collective nature and life of his race. But tomorrow, with the full and four-square emergence of the Supramental these fatal elements of his individual and collective nature will be radically transmuted. Unity, oneness, peace, harmony and the power to achieve these with ease are innate to the Supermind. The spiritually awakened as well as disciplined humanity of today has, thus, only to open itself fully, unhesitatingly and undoubtingly, in all the parts and corners of its complex nature and aspiration, to this new omnipotent Truth-Consciounsess which the Supramental is. The sooner it decides to do so, the more increasing spirit of surrendered collaboration with this new Force and Knowledge it develops within and without, the easier will it be for the Supramental to take up all the duties and tasks of the present-day man in its own unfailing and opulent hands and fulfil for him all those beautiful dreams of "God, Light, Freedom, Immortality" which he has been poignantly dreaming since the very beginnings of his consciousness.

The modern man, therefore, needs not only to be aware of his soul life within and outside himself and to live in it more and more, surrendering the very destiny of his life and the solution of all his problems into the

hands of his soul, but through this dynamic psychicisation of himself, to open himself fully and integrally to the radically transmuting influences and movements of the Supramental which has now manifested upon the earth once for all to lead it to embodied divinity of Truth-Consciousness here and now. It is the power and light of the Supramental and not the efforts of man, however high and pure and sincere, which will ultimately ensure the life of true peace, harmony and oneness upon earth, for the establishment of such a life here is nothing short of the founding of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth, and this is a task which only the supramentalised humanity can effectively, fruitfully and miraculously accomplish.

SREEKRISHNA PRASAD

THE RECIPROCAL INFLUENCE OF EASTERN AND WESTERN LITERATURE ON WRITERS OF THE PRESENT DAY AND THE FUTURE IN RELATION TO AESTHETIC VALUES.

THE way of life is the way of art. It is not possible to maintain a rigid dichotomy while considering the two. It is the same integral vision that should mould and does mould both art and life. But it is possible to emphasise one or the other of these two aspects and to interpret this vision in terms of art.

The influence of the West on the East in this field is already a matter of history and it has been even studied in considerable detail, though full documentation is still awaited in this field. It was the scientific, industrial and political advancement of the West that had, initially, a terrific impact on the East. Scientific invention, industrial progress and democratic growth were new lights on the eastern horizon a hundred and fifty years ago, not because the East had been unfamiliar with this way and trend of life from the beginning, but because it had entered on a period of creative infertility and decadence during the Middle Ages. It is well known that the Mediterranean or Graeco-Roman springs of European culture and civilisation themselves drew nourishment from the East, which was the cradle of human civilisation itself. But the first stirs of the Renaissance were experienced only in Europe. The advent of democracy and of applied science took place first on European soil. This gave an advantage to Europe over other parts of the world. While Asia was still lost in the slumber of the Middle Ages, Europe was wide awake and the new middle class that grew up there as a result of the new political and social structure gave her her modern statesmen, scientists, explorers, adventurers and merchant princes. Asia had to wait for the evolution of its own middle class till it experienced the politically humiliating but culturally exhilarating impact of the West.

The awakened aristocracy and the newly emerged middle class in Asia were responsible for what is known as the Indian Renaissance. The new movement in the field of literature was also ushered in by them. The

social, sociological, historical, psychological and semantic approaches to literature were concepts new to Indian critical thought,—new in their clarity, vividness and applicability, if not essentially. The intrinsic view of Art involved in a study of the uniqueness of each medium of expression, such as Lessing elaborated and a comparative study of world literature also opened up new vistas. Indan aesthetics had produced magnificent work in the field of psychological exploration,—in its pronouncements on the nature of Art and of aesthetic emotion. But very little prominence had been given to a study of the psychologial exploration by each individual artist. All these points of view were made vibrant and living to the Indian artist and critic by the Western impact. Again, the borrowal of a number of minor and major literary forms practically revolutionised Indian creative writing with the advent of the Renaissance in India.

The fact that this impact is a living influence even today, is undeniable. Sociologists like Fraser, psychologists like Freud and Jung, political thinkers like Karl Marx and philosophers like Bergson, Croce, Russell and Sartre, have attracted Indian writers from time to time. The European literature which grew up under these influences has also had its repercussions on Indian writing. New literary movements like Ibsenism and Shavianism in drama, the 'stream of consciousness' method in fiction and the modernist movement in poetry have left a mark on Indian writing. The new trends in scientific criticism, whatever their validity, have given a new perspective to critical writing.

The response from the West to eastern influences has been equally encouraging, though not so well known. William Jones, Rider, Fitzgerald and others introduced Eastern literature to the West through competent translations. Schopenhauer and other German philosophers were influenced by the Upanishads and German philosophy, in its turn, gave a new impetus to Romanticism in England and on the continent. One has only to read Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* to see how much Coleridge, one of the first apostles of Romanticism in England, was steeped in transcendental thought. Others, like Max Muller, were led on to the marvellous findings of comparative philology and mythology by their study of Sanskrit and Panini was held in great esteem by European linguists. Theosophy, a new spiritual movement, derived its inspiration from the East, and particularly from India, and even popular English novelists like Marie Corelli, were able to thrill millions of readers with a vivid, imaginative presentation of these new ideas. The eastern impact has been active even in more recent

times. If theosophy provided some inspiration at least to the work of poets like A.E. and W.B. Yeats, the Vedantic tradition of Swami Vivekananda influenced Romain Rolland, Aldous Huxley, Isherwood and other thinkers and novelists. Tagore's work has also been a living influence on the West. Gandhism has had its world-wide impact, upholding an ideal which is highly alien to the sophisticated West, but fascinating nevertheless.

I should like to refer here particularly to the work of an Indian writer and sage,—Sri Aurobindo, which is sure to have a liberating influence on the West and deserves to be better known indeed than at present. I would also mention with Sri Aurobindo the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry who, in her *Prayers and Meditations* and *Words of the Mother* and plays like *The Great Secret*, presents a view of life essentially identical with Sri Aurobindo's but in a much simpler manner. Sri Aurobindo's *Life Divine*, *The Human Cycle* and *The Ideal of Human Unity* project his integral thought on the metaphysical, the social and the political scene and present a synthetic philosophy which deserves the most careful attention of every intellectual. I do not elaborate on this because this talk is concerned more with art than with the ways of life.

Tagore's *Sadhana* and *The Religion of Man* and A. Coomar Swamy's *The Dance of Siva* and other works are valuable contributions to aesthetics from a new angle. Gandhiji was drawn more to truth than to beauty and there is more light than colour in his perceptions regarding Art. He was more interested in communication than in expression. It is to Sri Aurobindo that we have to go for a comprehensive statement on the subject. Nearly a century and a half ago, Coleridge made a beginning towards a transcendental theory of art, being influenced by Indian thought through German romanticism. The essential elements in Coleridge's teaching escaped the critics that came after him. In a way, it can be said that the fusion of eastern and western thought, which was prefigured in Coleridge's criticism, finds its consummation in the thought of Sri Aurobindo. The thrid volume of his *Letters* and *The Future Poetry* reveal an approach to the subject which is as original as it is comprehensive.

Before we proceed to consider the implications of this approach, we have to take into account the much larger meaning given to the terms *life* and '*experience*'. Blake and the English Romantics had attempted a similar enrichment of the meaning of these words in their poetry. Mysticism tends to be regarded in Europe as an escape from Reality, a flight into a subjective world, the private world of the individual. But it cannot be

so dismissed except at our own peril. Far from being escapist, such a perception is essential for understanding the very meaning of our terrestrial existence and for raising it to the height of the Utopia or New Jerusalem of our dreams. Reality is self-existent, conscious and blissful. It permeates the universe and all the objects in it and transcends it at the same time. It is from his still centre and through his intuition that man gets into communion with the Integral Reality. To consider the world of man's intuitive perceptions as mere fantasy, simply because the human intellect, which is a good servant but a bad master, interprets them that way, is to forfeit our claim to any total apprehension of Reality and to build up a world picture which would be fragmentary and therefore even calamitous. Again, such a perception is creative,—it has an illuminating as well as a transforming power. It transforms the human personality and brings it closer to the irresistible urge behind Nature,—the urge to evolve a new type of human being capable of this larger and inclusive experience, just as Nature led the evolution from Matter to Life and Life to Mind in the past. I do not wish to deviate here into other metaphysical problems incidental to this approach. I shall only say that both the denial of the earthly life by the ascetic and of the rejection of the higher consciousness by the materialist, as Sri Aurobindo points at, are partial views and that they have been responsible for the economic poverty of the East and the crisis in the West today.

We therefore need a creative literature and a criticism which can give this heightened awareness and tune the artist as well as the reader to its rhythm and movement. I wish to submit that gnostic writing of this kind is being produced in India today and that it is seen at its best in the works of Sri Aurobindo. As already mentioned, his transcendental theory of art has broken fresh ground in this field of inquiry. Vision is, for him, the distinctive feature of the aesthetic personality, even as discriminative thought is the *forte* of the philosopher and analytical observation of the scientist. Vision is only another name for knowledge by identity, that is, knowledge by a flash of intuitive insight which removes the very veil that conceals the soul of the object. To the innumerable definitions of poetry, Sri Aurobindo has made a significant addition. He calls it the Mantra of the Real. A mantra is a rhythmic revelation arising out of the soul's sight of God and Nature. Poetry is therefore the voice of the inmost truth and it is couched in the highest power of the very rhythm and speech of that truth. Again, in the Romantic and modernist position of 'nega

tive capability' and 'depersonalisation,' Sri Aurobindo sees a positive virtue When the seer is lost in the eternity of his vision, it is not merely the annihilation of self that he expresses in his writings. He becomes the sovereign voice of the very spirit of humanity.

Sri Aurobindo places a luminous quincunx in the forefront of his theory of art. There are five absolute values that preside over the birth of art,—spirit, life, delight, beauty and truth. It can be said that aesthetic activity reveals these five absolutes in five distinct parts,—inspiration, imitation, expression, communication and persuasion respectively. They are perceptible in a work of art in its five characteristics,—*dhwani* or suggestive power, *rasa* or attitude towards life, *bhava* or the spontaneous exhibition of creative thought and emotion, *alankāra* or the creation of beauty and *auchitya* or propriety. Aesthesis is not merely a theory of beauty. It is the theory of the taste or perception of Reality.

That is on the dynamic side. The *static aesthesis* is the shaping of experience within the poet himself, even before it is expressed in words. The first stage in it is one of wise passiveness,—receiving silently the essence of the object,—its very soul. Passing through the mind or senses or both, this perception of taste awakens a vital enjoyment of the taste. This is the second stage and it may be described as *bhoga*. When this vital enjoyment sinks into the soul and is slowly absorbed by it in a mood of serene contemplation, it awakens the soul to *ananda*, that is, to some form of the spirit's delight of existence. This is the final stage.

The perceptions expressed in a work of art may be purely vital, as in Kipling. All depends upon the vision of which the poet is capable. Sri Aurobindo recognises the four types of perception or beauty which Coleridge had recognised and set forth in his *Biographia Literaria*,—sensuous, imaginative, 'intellectual' or archetypal and spiritual. Again, the central fact of the aesthetic experience is vision, knowledge by identity. If the poet is merely enslaved by his sense of fact, he gives us 'truth' and nothing but the truth. If he allows the heart of his experience to be obscured by an excess of emotion, as does the Romanticist, he will be only ethereal and insubstantial. The modernists frequently indulge in an over-intellectual attitude,—their perceptions are 'teased' or retarded by the intellect. Sri Aurobindo would like to cultivate their consciousness or precision of style, but without subordinating the vision to the intellect.

The most significant part of Sri Aurobindo's thought on the subject is his elucidation of the originating sources of inspiration. A reference

has already been made to the larger meaning that he has given to the words 'life' and 'consciousness'. There are other planes of consciousness than what are ordinarily recognised,—inner or subliminal, psychic or relating directly to the soul and overhead planes like higher mind, illumined mind, intuition and overmind. Poetry may thus have the subtlety of the subliminal, the delicate beauty of the psychic or the larger sweep and richness of the overhead planes. Sri Aurobindo has illustrated all these varieties of inspiration with examples from famous English poets and his views on the subject will possibly throw a great deal of light on vexed critical problems like the evaluation of greatness in literature. For instance, he identifies the inspiration behind Shelley's *Ode to a Skylark* and the *Lines* beginning "One word is too often profaned" as a psychic inspiration. Wordsworth's lines in *The Prelude* on Newton's bust in King's Chapel, Cambridge.

> "The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone"

and Milton's famous line 'Those thoughts that wander through eternity' are described as proceeding from an overmental inspiration, having a touch of the cosmic width in them. A direct transmission of the substance of the overmental inspiration is found in a line like Shakespeare's "In the dark backward and abysm of time".

In his lyric poetry and in Savitri, his great epic, Sri Aurobindo has himself given us fascinating examples of the new poetry, the poetry of the future. While his experiments in quantitative metre break fresh metrical ground, his longer lyrics like *Ahana* are radiant with a new substance and imagery. It is not merely for vivid accounts of the inner and higher worlds of consciousness that we go to his poetry, though these are in themselves great, blending poetic vision almost with a scientific precision. This is what one finds in his accounts in *Savitri* of the kingdom of subtle matter, the world of falsehood, the paradise of the life-gods, the godheads of the Greater Mind and the Heavens of the Ideal. But there is, also, what Shri Purani calls the 'life-throb' of humanity, in Savitri,—a vast sympathy for humanity, as in the following words of the Mother of the seven sorrows:

> "I am the nurse of the dolour beneath the stars;
> I am the soul of all who wailing writhe

Under the ruthless harrow of the Gods.
I am woman, nurse and slave and beaten beast...

I have seen the peasant burning in his hut,
I have seen the slashed corpse of the slaughtered child,
Heard woman's cry ravished and stripped and haled
Amid the bayings of the hell-hound mob,
I have looked on, I had no power to save.
I have brought no arm of strength to aid or slay;
God gave me love, he gave me not his force."

There is an unsurpassed purity of beauty and delight as in this vision of the Divine Mother :

"All mights and greatnesses shall join in her;
Beauty shall walk celestial on the earth,
Delight shall sleep in the cloud-net of her hair
And in her body as on his homing tree
Immortal Love shall beat his glorious wings.
A music of griefless things shall weave her charm;
The harps of the Perfect shall attune her voice,
The streams of Heaven shall murmur in her laugh,
Her lips shall be the honeycombs of God,
Her limbs his golden jars of ecstacy,
Her breasts the rapture-flowers of Paradise.
She shall bear Wisdom in her voiceless bosom,
Strength shall be with her like a conqueror's sword
And from her eyes the Eternal's bliss shall gaze".

Sri Aurobindo's poetry can also convey to us the assurance and the wisdom with which the Divine Power inspires Aswapathy :

"Leave not the light to die the ages bore,
Help still humanity's blind and suffering life :

Assent to thy high self, create, endure.

My light shall be in thee, my strength thy force.
Let not the impatient Titan drive thy heart,

Ask not the imperfect fruit, the partial prize.
Only one boon, to greaten thy spirit, demand;
Only one joy, to raise thy kind, desire.
Above blind fate and the antagonist powers
Moveless there stands a high unchanging will;
To its omnipotence leave thy work's result.
All things shall change in God's transfiguring hour".

These are lines which have the passionate intensity of the last lines in Shelley's Prometheus Unbound and are instinct with a greater wisdom. It is when reading lines like these that one remembers Sri Aurobindo's prediction for the future : "The door that has been shut to all but a few may open; the kingdom of the Spirit may be established not only in man's inner being but in his life and his works. Poetry also may have its share in that revolution and become part of the spiritual empire".

Savitri is an epic which aims, not at the minimum, but at an exhaustive exposition of its world-vision. It is the record of a seeing which is not of the common kind, a poem of hope and fulfilment. It goes deeper than all other epics towards a solution of the basic problem of cosmic Ignorance and Inconscience which is the cause of evil and of human suffering. It creates, the personality of Savitri, a woman Avatar, who is Divine Grace incarnate and who fights victoriously against this original force of Ignorance represented by its extreme form of death. The epic introduces us to a cosmogony which is founded, not on astronomy, old or new, or religion, but on intuitive perception. It holds together, in its structure, the Dark Eternity as well as the Eternity of the Divine, sums up man's past and present and points to the future when Divine Love will deliver the soul of man from the clutches of death and ignorance and establish the reign of Divinity in man's life and works. It is untrue to say that epic poetry is no longer possible now or in the future. The epics of the soul are even grander subjects than themes of primitive war or adventure. The epic of the future, says Sri Aurobindo, "will reveal from the highest pinnacle and with the largest field of vision the destiny of the human spirit and the presence and ways and purpose of the Divinity in man and the universe". And this indeed is what *Savitri* achieves, compared with which Keats's *Hyperion* is a fragment and Wordsworth's *The Prelude* but a segment of the experience possible to man.

In giving this ancient Indian legend an epic magnitude, Sri Aurobindo

has employed to the full that process of poetic creation which C. Day Lewis calls 'a brooding concentration, the prayer of the intellect'. There is an overmental inspiration that frequently animates the expression in this Song of the Divine Life. Sri Aurobindo does not hesitate to bring in by way of metaphor and simile the latest findings of science and the ways of modern civilisation into this saga of the inner life, of humanity and the cosmos. He speaks of a kakemono of significant forms, an ocean of electric energy, magic television's glass, the sperm and gene, proton and photon, Necessity's logarithmic table, the calculus of destiny, the Inconscient's magic printing-house in which the stereotypes of Ignorance are shattered and of Life as a wide 'world kinder-garten of young souls'. He refers to unprovisioned cheques on the Beyond, signed by man's religion, practising fraud upon the credit-bank of Time.

The endeavour of the new mind, said Sri Aurobindo, is to "reveal, to divulge, and to bring near to our comprehension all mysteries". He said that the new poetry "need not at all be something high and remote or beautifully delicately tangible, or not that alone". It would make too "the highest things near, close and visible, will sing greatly and beautifully or all that we are from outward body to very God and self, of the finite and the infinite, the transient and the eternal, but with a new reconciling and fusing vision". I think that this is a matter of the highest importance when we are dealing with this question of the reciprocal influence of the East and West and I submit it to you for your consideration.

(Paper read at the P.E.N. Conference, 1957, in Tokyo).

V. K. Gokak

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MOTHER

VII (A)

THE SOUL OR THE PSYCHIC

IF we probe deep into our nature, we cannot fail to discover that behind the unceasing flux of its constituent elements there is a constant thirst for infinity and eternity. This thirst can be detected even in the very grain of the elements themselves. It is this secret thirst or yearning that is the source of hope which sustains us even in the midst of our worst trials. Our instinctive fear of death is an inverted hope of immortality. Our desires strain after an infinity of satisfaction. We covet a particular thing or a particular enjoyment, and when that is obtained, our desires, instead of ceasing, fully satisfied, increase in intensity and run after further satisfactions. Our emotions like love and hate seem to be limitless and unfathomable. Our sensations, likewise, betray no end or term of their lust for pleasure. Our thoughts, above all, wing and soar beyond the confines of our sense-mind, exploring immeasurable spaces and surprising truths after truths which widen and enlighten our life and culture. All this proves—and even the most confirmed materialist cannot but perceive it—that there is something in us which has a divination of its infinity and immortality, and a conscious or subconscious urge towards it in life—a being, an entity or a principle, call it what you like, that does not perish with the perishing elements of our nature, an immortal inhabitant of this mortal tenement, a child of infinity in this fleeting, finite form. How shall we otherwise account for this thirst implanted in the depth of our consciousness for infinity and immortality, the ever-expanding horizons of our vision and aspiration, our ineradicable faith in an illimitable progression towards perfection ? How could a finite being, made wholly of finite elements and a fixed quantum of finite energies, dream of the infinite and reach after it ? The very perception of our finiteness, our mortality, our state of captivity in a world which imposes its iron laws upon us, and our anguished helplessness against the blind forces of nature that toss and tor-

ture our lives into any shapes they like—in the spiritual seekers this perception becomes acute and poignant—this very perception presupposes a consciousness somewhere within us, however dim and inchoate it may be, of a potential existence of infinite freedom and immortal bliss. We chafe against our finiteness only because we have an occult apprehension of infinity. Our struggle against death and disintegration is induced by a subconscious feeling that we are heirs to an undying life. Science advances forward to conquer more and more of knowledge and power, but what sustains and inspires its intrepid endeavours is nothing but a faith in the infinite potentialities of man. In fact, if life is evolving, if human culture is progressing in various directions, and the knowledge and power of man are extending their frontiers and their sway over the forces that oppose them, it is only due to the fundamental faith in the heart of man that he can achieve everything, and that nothing can ultimately prevail against his will, which is indomitable in its infinite force. It is at once an evidence and affirmation of the principle of infinity which man contains deep within him.

But what is that in man which exhales this sense of infinity and immortality ? The materialist does not know it. Too exclusively preoccupied with the fugitive elements of his life and nature and the outer aspects and processes of things, he does not care to inquire if there is anything within him which, defying defeat, death and destruction, leads him from behind a veil—an invisible pilot, a living fount of perennial hope and strength and inspiration. If ever a beam of light penetrates into his outer consciousness from behind the veil, or a still small voice breathes into his heart a message of ethereal import, he muffles it, lest it disturb his complacent scepticism, the pride of his culture and civilisation. But the salvation of materialistic science lies in being scientific enough to recognise that besides the surface of man and things and Nature it has so successfully explored, there are far-flung uplands and hinterlands and netherlands which it has yet to explore ; depths upon depths of human consciousness and nature, and even of material nature, beckon to its adventurous spirit. It must march forward to the conquest of the unknown with the same unflagging will and energy by which it has already conquered many a recondite secret of the known. For, indeed, the unknown is not unknowable, and even the known cannot be perfectly known except in reference to the vast unknown that enfolds, informs, sustains and directs it. The latest trend in scientific thought, wobbling between physics and metaphysics, suggests the beginning of the great venture.

In the immortal words of Maitreyi in the Upanishad we find a pointed reference to that which is imperishable in us : "What shall I do with that which will not make me immortal ?" She refused her husband's offer of wealth and property, and expressed her firm resolve to follow him on his quest of the eternal Reality. For she knew that life is lived in vain if death is not conquered in it. She was athirst for the Infinite and Eternal, the one, imperishable Reality of all existence. Christ's teaching, though often quoted, is hardly understood by the majority of those who call themselves Christians. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" These are no mere words of visionary idealism, but an impassioned exhortation to man, to every man in the world, to know his real self,[1] his real, eternal "I", and get beyond death and dissolution. What man knows and cherishes as his "I", that for which he sweats and bleeds, outrages his conscience and blackens his life and nature, is but a flux, a changing fabric appearing and disappearing in the tides of Time, as science can very well convince him. Neither his body nor his life, his thoughts nor his feelings, his sensations nor his actions are really his—they are waves and eddies of universal energies passing through him as they pass and repass through all created beings. As the Mother vividly puts it : "Before the true self is known, you are a public place, not a being. There are so many clashing forces working in you..."[2] "Your present individuality is a very mixed thing, a series of changes which yet preserves a certain continuity, a certain sameness or identity of vibration in the midst of all flux. It is almost like a river which is never the same and yet has a certain definiteness and persistence of its own. Your normal self is merely a shadow of your true individuality which you will realise only when this normal individual which is differently poised at different times, now in the mental, then in the vital, at other times in the physical, gets into contact with the psychic and feels it as its real being."[3] The psychic is the real, abiding core of man's shifting outer structure. That is his real "I". To discover and realise the psychic or the soul must be his first business in life, as Socrates always insisted, and as every religion or spiritual discipline in-

[1] "There is a root or depth in thee from whence all these faculties come forth as lines from a centre, or as branches from the body of a tree. This depth is called the centre, the fund or bottom of the soul. This depth is the unity, the Eternity...of thy soul."

—William Law

[2] & [3] *Words of the Mother* 3rd Series.

variably teaches. Science, as Bertrand Russell admits, is incapable of furthering man's genuine progress, simply because it cannot remove his pitiful ignorance of himself and enlighten him on the true ends of life. "I mean by wisdom a right conception of the ends of life. This is something which science in itself does not provide. Increase of science by itself, therefore, is not enough to guarantee any genuine progress." Genuine progress can come only by finding the soul, the inextinguishable divine spark we carry within us. "The psychic being is also a great discovery to be made requiring as much fortitude and endurance as the discovery of new continents"[1].

The Psychic Presence and the Psychic Being

The Divine Consciousness which is involved here in Matter is immanent as a Presence in all that exists. In every living being on earth this consciousness becomes a psychic presence, a nucleus of the psychic being. "With regard to the evolution upwards, it is more correct to speak of the psychic presence than the psychic being. For it is the psychic presence which little by little becomes the psychic being. In each evolving form there is this presence, but it is not individualised. It is something which is capable of growth and follows the movement of the evolution."[2] The psychic presence, a spark of the Divine Consciousness, is the only thing that is permanent in the impermanent forms we assume from life to life. It gathers round itself all sorts of elements for the formation of an individuality, the psychic being; for individualisation is the first decisive step evolution takes in its creation of diversity. But that diversity may not lead to disorder, it proceeds on the basis of the unity of the Divine Consciousness, and uses the psychic being as an immortal, living individual unrolling infinite variation on the bosom of a conscious unity. The psychic being is the living temple of the Divine on earth, and if we aspire to realise the Divine, it can be only through a realisation of the psychic in us. "Below the human level there is, ordinarily, hardly any individual formation—there is only this (psychic) presence more or less."[3]

[1] *The Mother on Education* .
[2] & [3] *Words of the Mother*, 3rd Series.

The Origin and Nature of the Psychic Being

We have already seen that it is the one, immanent, indivisible Divine Consciousness that, dwelling in each living form on earth as a psychic presence, develops a psychic personality and becomes the psychic being, an individualised entity representing an aspect of the Divine and meant to manifest that aspect in its earthly life. There is a general belief that the soul comes down from the Divine and gets entangled in the meshes of karma in the material world, and that its salvation lies in its realisation of its innate freedom from karma and its return to from where it came. The Mother does not subscribe to this age-old view. According to her, the soul or the psychic is "a child of the earth."[1] It is here, out of the inconscience of Matter that the involved Divine Consciousness emerges and, remaining immanent in all, becomes a soul or psychic in every living form; and it is this soul that is the indestructible centre of our evolving individuality; in fact, the only real individual in us. Essentially the psychic being is the Divine Consciousness individualised, immaculate in its purity and conscious of the Divine in itself; but it is shrouded in the obscurity of Matter in the beginning—a thin, quivering spark of fire, a pulsing ray of consciousness in the cimmerian darkness of the material world. Then it evolves little by little till the spark becomes a flame, a togue of fire rising straight to the Divine. As it evolves and awakens, it begins to radiate its influence to all the parts of our nature, and it is only because of its growing influence that our heart or mind feels an aspiration for something higher and purer than what ordinary life can give us—an unconditioned peace or bliss, an infinite existence of freedom and harmony, the Divine Reality. All that contributes to sweetness and beauty, to purity and perfection derives from the psychic. The very principle of perfection or the urge to self-transcendence that we feel within us comes from the psychic or the soul. Even those who deny the soul cannot escape its purifying and ennobling influence. But the influence remains indirect, and is impeded in its action so long as the soul has not awakened enough to stamp itself upon the outer parts of our nature. The awakened soul can turn even the rankest scepticism into faith and convert a determined materialist into an ardent seeker of Spirit. "Once we are securely conscious of the true soul in us which is always surrendered to the Divine, all bondage ceases. Then incessantly life begins

[1] It is, at the same time, a child of the Infinite.

afresh, the past no longer cleaves to us."[1] This contact with the psychic being in us, and the change of consciousness that results from it are called new birth. "To be reborn means to enter, first of all into our psychic consciousness where we are one with the Divine and eternally free from the reactions of karma."[2]

Till the psychic is awake and in front, it is the ego in us that is the leader of our life. The desires and impulses of our vital (prana) and the ideas, opinions and preferences of our mental being are all egoistic in their nature and drive. If left to themselves, they would never turn to the Divine, but perpetually spin round the ego. Born of the obscurity of Matter and nursed by subconscient energies, they multiply division and discord and mechanically repeat the movements of the world forces. And the ego itself with which we are so completely identified and which we regard as our real "I", is but a creation and tool of ignorant Nature and subject to constant mutation. It is only when the psychic awakes that we can be said to be on the way to discovering our real individuality. It is only a contact with the soul and with the Divine in the soul that can make our life worth living, for, the soul gives not only meaning and significance to our life, but the right direction, and, finally, the right fulfilment. "All things are insignificant in ordinary life. The thoughts you think, the actions you do, the feelings you experience, all your movements have no significance at all, they possess no value. They belong to the superficial parts of your being, they come and pass away, like ripples on the sea, leaving no trace or effect in the depths. Only at a rare moment, if ever you come in contact with a corner of your soul, if something of that inmost consciousness touches or gazes at any limb of yours, that flash of a moment is the only significant thing that happens in the midst of all the useless mass that is your life. This is the only precious point and the rest a world of rubbish. To make your life significant, to give it its true meaning and value, you must then draw back from the surface trivialities and look for something else behind. You must go very deep indeed if things are to cease being insignificant."[3]

In the dust and heat of life's struggles, we hardly ever pause to reflect and ask ourselves whether there is any ulterior purpose and goal of our life, whether or not, indeed, there is something deep within us that whirls not in the vortex of Nature, that craves not in our cravings, suffers not in

[1] & [2] *Words of the Mother*, 3rd Series.
[3] *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo*, Part VII—by Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta.

our sufferings, dies not in our death, but abides, calm and smiling, watching our joys and griefs, watching our victories and defeats, and raying out its influence, little by little, to turn our consciousness from the futile turmoil of the surface to the limpid peace and harmony of the depths, from the ignorance and discord and ugliness of the external world to the beauty and truth and happiness of the veiled domains of our being, from the passing show of appearances to the ever-lasting, all-enfolding Reality, the Divine. We, who brag of our knowledge and culture, are so blissfully ignorant of the very essence of our being, the reason of our existence, the infinite source of light and love and life we carry within us ! The soul, our inmost being, "is a centre of light and truth and knowledge and beauty and harmony which the Divine Self in each of you creates by His Presence, little by little; it is influenced, formed and moved by the Divine Consciousness of which it is a part and parcel. It is in each of you the deep inner being which you have to find in order that you may come in contact with the Divine in you. It is the intermediary between the Divine Consciousness and your external consciousness; it is the builder of the inner life; it is that which manifests in the outer nature the order and rule of the Divine Will. If you become aware in your outer consciousness of the psychic being within you and unite with it, you can find the pure Eternal Consciousness and live in it; instead of being moved by the ignorance as the human being constantly is, you grow aware of the presence of an eternal light and knowledge within you, and to it you surrender and are integrally consecrated to it and moved by it in all things.

"For your psychic being is that part of you which is already given to the Divine. It is its influence gradually spreading from within towards the most outward and material boundaries of your consciousness that will bring about the transformation of your entire nature. There can be no obscurity here; it is the luminous part in you."[1]

"The psychic being is that which persists after death, because it is your eternal self; it is this that carries the consciousness forward from life to life."[2]

Though the psychic being represents and manifests one particular aspect of the Divine, yet it is one with the Divine. It does not feel its own existence as separate from the universal existence. It lives in conscious unity with all. "You are conscious there (in the psychic being) that your

[1] & [2] *Words of the Mother.*

individuality is your own line of expression, but at the same time you know too that it is an expression objectifying the one universal consciousness."[1] It is only the ego in us that, in its pitiful ignorance, denies the soul, denies God, denies everything that would deliver it from death and suffering. It is proud of its atheism, its agnosticism, its scepticism, and regards them as the hall-mark of a rationalistic culture. It continues in its wilful blindness till the breath of the psychic passes over it, quickening it to a new aspiration and orienting its consciousness towards the Infinite and Eternal. For, sooner or later, the psychic must awake and the troubled night of our ignorance must pass for ever. The Divine in us wills to manifest.

The Mission of the Psychic Being

That the soul or psychic being has any mission to fulfil on earth is overlooked by almost all religions and philosophies. The general notion is that the soul has somehow got ensnared in Prakriti (Nature) or karma, and has, in consequence, to pass through numberless births and deaths, suffering the agonies incidental to them, and that its only business in life is to break out of the snare and retire to its unconditioned existence of perfect purity and freedom. This notion bypasses all question of the mission of the soul. It does not care to inquire why the soul, intrinsically pure and free and blissful, should have got enmeshed in Prakriti, karma or samskaras. The fact of the bondage is taken for granted, and escape or flight is proclaimed as the summum bonum of human life. It is hardly realised that this notion is a tacit repudiation of most forms of theism, particularly those in which elements of monistic teleology predominate. The Mother gives us an original exposition of the mission of the psychic.

We have already learnt from the Mother how the psychic being is formed; how, essentially one with the Divine Consciousness and partaking of its infinity and immortality, it yet develops by the process of evolution an individuality of its own which becomes a particular radiating centre of the Divine Consciousness. It manifests an individual aspect of the universal and transcendent Divine. The object of its passing through births is not only awakening and liberation from the thraldom of Nature and recovery of its essential consciousness, but also a progressive preparation of its

[1] *Words of the Mother.*

nature parts of mind, life and body for an eventual manifestation of the Divine and the fulfilment of His purpose on earth.

"The Psychic is like the wire between the generator and the lamp. What is the generator and what is the lamp, or rather, who is the generator and who the lamp ? The Divine is the generator and the body, the visible being, the lamp. The function, then, of the Psychic is to connect the two. In other words, if there were no Psychic in Matter, Matter would not come in direct contact with the Divine.".[1]

Is it not a flood of new light thrown upon the role the psychic being is meant to play upon earth ? The psychic being is, we are told, a living link, a bridge, between the Divine and brute Matter. "It is a speciality of the earth alone." Though the Divine immanence is there in all beings and objects in all the worlds of the universe, the psychic being is only in the beings of the earth, and in no other. And among the beings of the earth, it is man alone who has the rare, glorious privilege of achieving a full efflorescence of the psychic being in himself and thereby becoming a perfect channel of divine manifestation. Integral divine transformation, integral divine union and manifestation of which even the gods are not capable, are the inevitable destiny of man on earth, thanks to the presence of the psychic in him.[2] The psychic is "the direct infusion of a purifying and redeeming agent into the most obscure and unconscious Matter to waken it by degrees towards the Divine Consciousness, the Divine Presence, to the Divine Himself. It is the psychic presence that makes of man an exceptional being... But to tell the truth, he does not seem to have profited much by it. He does not look like considering his virtue as something very desirable. He prefers to it his mental ideas, he prefers to it his vital demands and he prefers to it his physical habits. I do not know how many of you have read the Bible. But there is a story that I used to like always. There were two brothers, Esau and Jacob. Esau had gone out hunting and felt tired and hungry. He came back home and found his brother preparing a dish. He asked Jacob to feed him. Jacob said he would give him food if he, Esau, sold his birthright to him. Esau said, of what use is the birth-right to me now, and sold

[1] *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* Part VII,—by Sri Nolini Kanta Gupta.

[2] "...Beings from other worlds, worlds of what are known as demi-gods or even gods, beings from what Sri Aurobindo calls the Overmind, are anxious to take a physical body upon earth so that they may experience the Psychic, as they do not possess it".

it to his brother. You understand the significance ? You can take it quite in the superficial way. But I took it differently. The birth-right is the right to be son of God. And Esau was quite ready to give up his divine right for a mess of pottage. It is an old story, but it is eternally true."[1] It is the worst tragedy that can happen to mankind—and it happens perpetually—that he sells away his soul, his divine birth-right to be a son of God, for a mere mess of earthly pottage ! If he only turned to the psychic within him, believing that it is his own true, essential and immortal divine self, and that the the external parts of his being are all a flux of ephemeral elements, that would be the end of his ignorant struggles and miseries. The psychic would, then, gradually become the overt leader of his life, linking his external consciousness to the Divine Consciousness and manifesting in his outer nature "the order and rule of the Divine Will." It is the psychic being that infuses its influence into all the parts of our nature and transforms them. It is the psychic from which we receive intimations of freedom, purity, infinity and immortality. It is the psychic that enlivens us with a sense of beauty and makes us participate in the termless ecstasy of the Divine Existence. It is the psychic that inflames us with love and devotion for the Divine, and compels the discords of our life to dissolve into order and harmony. The unity, equality, happy concord and cooperation which the progressive modern mind is groping after, the coordinated progress of mankind towards a nobler existence, a higher perfection to which it is dimly aspiring, can be realised only by a direct flow of the Divine Force into us through a full-fledged psychic being. No moral precept, no emotional or humanitarian appeal, but the psychic alchemy alone can change the animal in man into a god. It is impossible to regard others as others after a perfect realisation of the psychic being—others become our own self. Conscious unity with all is of the very stuff of the psychic life. A dynamic union with the psychic unites us with the Divine, and with the whole universe in the Divine. This union is the well-spring of universal love. "Live in the consciousness of the psychic centre, thus your will shall express the Divine's Will alone and your transformed being will then be able to receive and manifest the Divine Love."[2]

What we know as faith in the Divine Presence everywhere and the Divine's power to heal and redeem all, is a gift of the psychic. It is nothing

[1] *The Yoga of Sri Aurobindo* Part VII by Nolini Kanta Gupta.
[2] *Words of the Mother.*

irrational or superstitious, as the callow rationalist would glibly assert, but a reflection upon our consciousness of the spontaneous knowledge of the psychic; for, the psychic knows and is one with the Divine by identity. It is small wonder, then, that faith moves mountains. For, behind the strong faith of a man, sustaining and fortifying it, stands the infinite omnipotence of the Divine to which nothing is impossible. To kindle faith and establish a conscious contact with the psychic within us is the first, indispensable preliminary to manifesting God in Matter, which is the mission of the psychic on earth.

(To be continued)

RISHABHCHAND

THE LIFE DIVINE (An Outline)

VOLUME II

CHAPTER XV

REALITY AND THE INTEGRAL KNOWLEDGE.

THE origin of the Ignorance is a limitation of knowledge; its nature is a separation of the being from its own integrality; and its boundaries are formed by this separative development of consciousness. The inner turn towards knowledge must then be a progress to integrality, a disappearance of the limitation, and a breaking down of separativeness. An essential and integral consciousness identified with the whole truth of self and existence must replace the present limited and separative one. The integral Knowledge is there veiled in our deeper and greater self; it has to be uncovered by the awakening of our spiritual consciousness. There is both an integral self-knowledge and an integral world-knowledge.

An integral spiritual consciousness links the highest term of being with the lowest into an indivisible whole. At the summit it opens to the Absolute; at the lowest end is the Inconscience from which our evolution begins and the secret Consciousness is unveiled. Moving between these two extremes the One is manifested in the Many, the Infinite in the finite, and the timeless Eternal in eternal Time. This consciousness transforms the universe as well as the individual, enabling them to overcome separateness from the Divine Reality and Divine Nature.

The power of the Truth-consciousness is the consciousness of the integral Reality; but our idea of Reality varies with our status of consciousness, which can be intensive or extensive, exclusive or inclusive. We can also experience, in a high spiritual achievement, the ineffable Absolute which comes to us as the sole Reality, excluding the individual and cosmos as real. From this experience both knowledge and Ignorance would seem to be temporal, and hence we have to transcend them and reach the absolute superconsciousness. In this absolute identity knowledge disappears,

and so the Absolute remains unattainable by mind. And if Ignorance is a limited action of the divine Knowledge, then from this absolute exclusiveness Knowledge is only a higher Ignorance stopping short of the absolute Reality. This spiritual experience, however, is not the whole truth of the supreme spiritual experience.

We find in the Upanishads, that apart from the experience of the ineffable Transcendence there is also the affirmation of the cosmic Divinity, the becoming of Brahman in the universe, as well as the affirmation of the Divine Reality in the individual. There is a unity and reality of all the manifestations of the Absolute (Isha Upanishad). And therefore the perfect and liberating knowledge excludes neither Self nor its creations. To live either in the cosmic Ignorance or in the exclusive absolutism of knowledge is a blindness. We attain the integral knowledge through both Becoming and the Non-Becoming. This is the foundation of the Life Divine; and the ineffable Absolute is attained through both a supreme affirmation and a supreme negation.

One experience, then, of the Absolute is through the silent and inactive Self in which we pass beyond the cosmic error and personal existence into the eternal Peace and Silence. But a more comprehensive experience indicates that the Becoming is a true movement of Being, and that both Being and the Becoming are truths of one absolute Reality. The first experience, by itself presents a relationless Absolute where the world of relativities appears false and unreal. The aim here would be the liberation of the spirit from this seeming unreality. The second experience is beyond either positive or negative limitations, of existence or non-existence. The Absolute cannot be a void or sheer emptiness. The sign of its absoluteness is that it can be an infinity of unity and an infinity of multiplicity. The universe in fact is one permanent expression of its possibilities.

The realisation of the truth of the Absolute does not, then, mean a rejection or dissolution of the universe. An unreal universe manifested by an illusory Power, aloof from the Absolute, is a conception due to the mind's limitation in grasping one aspect of the Reality and losing the other. But there need be no such dividing line between one aspect and the other. The Absolute itself is not limited by our mental ignorance.

There is the unmanifest Unknowable, and there is the manifest which is knowable but only partly manifest to our ignorance. Even though our widest mental knowledge cannot grasp the Unknowable, yet it is evident

that the Absolute is manifesting itself, whether through our knowledge or through our ignorance. Through the diversity we can reach the Oneness. Is it then possible to reach the absolute Being by renouncing the Becoming? Only if we differentiate between a real Absolute and a relative universe that appears partial and misleading.

The One and the Many represents that which does not become or that which takes form, and that which becomes or takes form. Is then knowledge the possession of one term, and ignorance the possession of the other? This would mean a drawing away from the reality of the Becoming to the greater reality of the Being, a leap from Ignorance to the Knowledge, from the Many to the One. It would imply that the Becoming is false, or at least irreconcilable with the Being. Yet there is the strong claim of the Infinite upon us to free us from the bounds of the finite and thus destroy all individuality and limitations. Escape from Matter, Life and Mind seems a rapid solution, to find release in the repose and purity of the Spirit. The Inconscience is a prison or a vain dream; our wakening then must be in the superconscious, the bliss of the Eternal.

Our inquiry into the relation of Knowledge and Ignorance points, however, to a larger reconciliation. For these apparently opposite terms of One and Many are really complements of each other. One is not lost in the other; they are two faces of one Reality. While Ignorance is a separateness from the Being, the integral Knowledge is a consciousness in possession of both Being and Becoming. The possession of the Being brings us freedom from attachment to the Cosmic existence, and hence a free possession of the Becoming. Knowledge of Becoming in itself, without the Oneness of the Being, acts as an Ignorance.

The Absolute finds its oneness as easily in the divided many as in the withdrawal from the many. It is also true that the multiplicity finds itself explained only when it is contained and possessed in the infinity of the One, while at the same time the One pours itself in the infinity of the Many. The conscious Soul is also capable of such outpouring without losing itself in its infinite variations. Similarly the finite varieties of the Self are not denials of the Infinite's endless expression; for the Infinite finds the joy of its limitlessness in variation in finite form. The Divine Being in fact can take innumerable forms because He is beyond all form in His essence; all these are the expression of the delight of His being. Thus Matter, whether mental or material is a form and body of Spirit and is the created basis for the self-expression of the Spirit. Even the Inconscient

holds in itself the luminous Superconscient; and to reveal this latter in Time is the aim of Nature's cycles.

But we have also to take into account other conceptions of reality. All that exists may be a subjective creation of Mind, and the objective reality may thus be an illusion. But even if objects have no intrinsic reality the creative Consciousness may be the sole Real. Yet even this latter may be a continuity, only an appearance of reality. This would be an absolute Nirvana or Non-Existence. Behind this may be an Inconscience or Superconscience beyond all idea. Yet this view is based more on the working of our surface mind, where all seems impermanent, rather than a deeper self-knowledge.

If, on the other hand, the creative Consciousness is the sole reality, then the universe is maintained by the subjective structure of this consciousness. But if this creative Consciousness has no Being or Existence supporting it, how can it create forms of its own existence ? The Consciousness must be a Being or an Existence.

If there is a dual reality of Being and Consciousness, we might suppose, as in the Sankhya philosophy, that the plurality of separate beings, each creating its own consciousness, is alone real; yet there must be one co-ordinating Consciousness or Energy. This accounts for the multitude, and the oneness in diversity of things; and if there is One Consciousness or Energy, there must also be one original Being supporting this Plurality. Are then the figures of this plurality realities, or representative symbols, values created by Mind ? If the universe is a construction of Mind, then it must be only a subjective or symbolic reality. But if there is a greater Consciousness behind Mind, then the universe can be the true reality of the One Existence.

A Mind of the nature of our surface intelligence can only be a secondary power, since it bears the stamp of incapacity and ignorance. It has only a built knowledge and controlling power and cannot be the original creatrix. There may, however, be behind this surface mind a universal Mind capable of omnipotence. Yet the very nature of Mind is an Ignorance seeking for knowledge. It does not possess the total or integral knowledge. The possessor of the integral knowledge would be a perfect Truth-Consciousness. From this point of view we see that the reality of things resides in something that is within them and is independent of our mind's interpretation. This latter is only a subjective view, but the universe is more than this. It is in essence a creation of consciousness, a consciousness that is one with being and whose substance is substance of Being. In this

view the subjective and objective truth are both real, two sides of the same Reality.

All things, including language, are to us symbols, since they are a representation of That by which they (and we) exist. Unity is a symbol and multiplicity is another symbol; infinity of existence and the infinity of non-existence are each symbols. Thus also we say that the Inconscient and the Superconscient are two poles of the manifestation of the Absolute and our passage from one to the other is a progressive interpretation and building up in ourselves of this manifestation. By this unfolding we arrive at the consciousness of the Divine Presence and of ourselves and the world.

Yet this is but a mental representation, an abstract symbol or sign corresponding to a certain truth of the manifestation. Each form is an expression of some power of the Reality which inhabits it; each happening is a movement in the working out of some Truth of the Being. Our mind is but an interpreter which reflects some Truth of the Being that exists independently, either perceptible or not to the physical senses. Mind is an intermediary that actualises possibilities, and is not an original power. The real creatrix is a Consciousness, an Energy inherent in the transcendent and cosmic Spirit.

There is an opposite view of Reality as an objective truth. Here physical Energy is the one fundamental existence, from which consciousness, mind, soul or spirit have issued. All that is not physical and objective has to have a recognisable relation to physical things, to be classed as a reality. This view, however, only looks at one side of existence, and leaves all the rest unexplained. It regards a material object as a greater reality than thought, love, courage or the human soul and mind. These latter are only of value in so far as they make themselves effective upon objective realities. On the other hand, the objective may be only a field or means for the soul's progression in Time; or it may be an outward form of the Spirit. These two views point to the fact that the subjective and objective are two necessary sides of the manifested Reality.

Subjectivity and objectivity are dependent on each other. One is a regard for the inner consciousness, and the other is an outlook provided by the outer physical senses. But the latter becomes reliable only when the evidence of the senses is interpreted by an internal intuition and justified by reason. Otherwise sensory evidence alone is imperfect and incomplete. The subjective consciousness is in fact the means of our knowing; the physical senses are but instruments. We cannot therefore deny a reality

to subjective or supraphysical experience. If these are unreal then the objective world must also be unreal. There must, then, be another method than the external senses of verifying the subjective and supraphysical realities. We must seek a method applicable to their own reality and nature.

We have to see that there are different orders of reality, of which the physical objective is only one. This latter is only convincing to the physical mind, through the senses, which receive only fragmentary data and inferences of the subjective and supraphysical experiences. The individual mind can know something of its own inner experiences but it is ignorant of the consciousness of others, except by outward observation. This is the limitation of man's physical mind.

Man's present knowledge has been built on this restricted ego-centric attitude, where the personal mind and reason is the standard, or the average mind and experience is. Although each man has to think for himself, according to his capacity, his judgement must be open to a larger knowledge Erecting an objective physical standard, which excludes subjectivity, does not exclude error. The supraphysical must have its own way of approach other than that of the physical knowledge.

It is as much a blindness to reject 'a priori' spiritual knowledge as it is to reject knowledge based on scientific evidence. The spiritual experiences of any value, being inner discoveries, cannot be judged by the common mentality which has no experience of them, as physical truth can be. Even for the latter a training and proper approach is necessary. So for spiritual knowledge there must be the proper verification through channels of similar inner experience. For it is clear that man cannot be content with only the knowledge of the physical mind. By opening to the inner, spiritual, superconscient reality can there be liberation from the Ignorance.

All domains of subjective experience must be fathomed to gain the integral knowledge. An inner range of spiritual experience has to be entered into ; the supraphysical has to become part of a complete knowledge. Unfortunately this latter has been associated with occultism and rejected as superstition. There is, however, a true occultism with its own secret laws —the laws of mind-energy, and life-energy, and subtle physical energies. In this way man extends his mastery of the human spirit beyond the ordinary operations of mind, life and his physical existence. Not only can the self and spirit be discovered but also the power of that knowledge, and the spiritual way of action. These have to enter into the life of humanity as a part of its evolution. Science, bringing to light the hidden secrets of

Nature, is itself an occultism. And man utilises these powers. But a supra-physical knowledge is necessary for a complete physical knowledge.

It is only when Matter appears to be the fundamental reality that objectivity is the only standard. But it is now clear that matter cannot be the sole reality, but is one mode of Existence, as an exclusive concentration. Just as there has been built up a knowledge of matter, so there must be built up a knowledge of mind, life, spirit and soul. Nor will an exclusive pre-occupation with mind or with life give us the total solution. An exclusive concentration is useful only for a knowledge of a limited field. It forms the means of extending one's knowledge but is not in itself the integral knowledge. We look upon Spirit as the fundamental reality, from which all other modes of reality have been built.

An integral knowledge must include all sides of existence, both separately and in their relation. There is at present an Ignorance and many-sided seeking; but the fundamental truth must first be found. The fundamental Real contains the truth of all existence, the truth of the individual, the universe, and all that is beyond the universe. The Mind must seek on the highest levels of experience, and not merely on the level of Matter alone.

Our Ignorance is based on a many-sided self-ignorance. We are ignorant of the Absolute which is the source of all. We are ignorant of the timeless and immutable Self (the cosmic ignorance). We are ignorant of our universal self, our infinite unity with all being and becoming; this is the egoistic ignorance. We are ignorant of our eternal becoming in Time, which constitutes the temporal ignorance. Tied to the surface becoming we are ignorant of our large and complex being, which is the psychological ignorance. We are ignorant of our true integral becoming, which is the constitutional ignorance. Consequently we are ignorant of the true action and responses, which is the seventh, the practical ignorance.

Integral knowledge means cancelling this sevenfold ignorance by a sevenfold revelation: the knowledge of the Absolute, the knowledge of the Self and its becoming, the knowledge of the world as one with us, the knowledge of our psychic entity, the knowledge of our inner existence, the knowledge of our mind, life and body in relation to the self within, and finally the true use of our thought, will and action as a conscious expression of the truth of the Spirit.

This is not an intellectual knowledge, but one of experience, a change of consciousness and being. Our mental ignorance is only a stage in our

evolution. The integral knowledge, as a change of consciousness, can be gained by a process of will and endeavour, resulting in a conscious self-transformation. We have to see what is the principle of this new process of evolution, the nature of the consciousness that must be the basis of the life divine.

N. PEARSON

In the self or pure-existence there is no time or space, except spiritual space or voidness.

SRI AUROBINDO

REVIEWS

The Poetry and the Philosophy of the Tamil Siddhars. *By A. V. Subramania Aiyar.* Pub. S. Mahadevan, Publishers, Tirunelveli. Pp. xi+87 Price Rs. 2/—

South India has been always famous for its orthodoxy. Its conservatism in matters of religion as in other walks of life e.g. social customs, arts and sciences, has been traditional and has served a purpose in the historical evolution of the country. For it is this element that has helped to preserve many of the basic traditions and institutions in the life of its people against the frequent incursions of forces and influences alien to the genius of the soil. Be that as it may, it is not known equally well that the South has been also a centre for reaction and revolt against custom and tradition—at any rate in some of its extreme forms—, even centuries ago. The standard of revolt was then raised not by politicians or self-declared atheists but by shining exemplars of cultural and spiritual achievement—Siddhars as they have been called in the annals of the peninsula. The neat little book before us gives a brief but interesting account of the times, the life and the message of the more prominent of these Siddhars.

It was about the fourth and fifth century of the present era that the socio-religious movement of the people of these regions—the kingdoms of the Tamils—had run into the hardening moulds of ceremonial religion, rituals of temple worship and social conventions; the springs of spirituality that have always kept the life currents in this country fresh and dynamic were slowly drying up. "The domination of the Agamic religion and rituals over somes ections of the people became strong at the period when Shaivism and Vaishnavism took deep root after overthrowing Buddhism and Jainism in a grim encounter that lasted three centuries. The Bhakti movement, which formed the main feature of this religion in its early stages and which called forth the best creative impulses of the community and gave birth to great Art and Literature gradually began to lose its original fire, purity, and chastening influence...the will of the community to live a fruitful Dharmic life weakened. The responsibility of the individual to develop

himself by discipline and ethical conduct, which had been stressed in earlier centuries by Tiruvalluvar and the Jain moralists was lost sight of. Divisions sprang up on sectarian lines. In due course, the true spirit of religion, which was so powerful and creative earlier, was slowly fading away. It was in such a situation that the Tamil Siddhars rose in revolt and began to preach their doctrines." (Pp. 4-6)

Who are the Siddhars ? The Siddhars are not merely those who have achieved *siddhi*, perfection in their line, be it religion, yoga, medicine or any other avocation. They are a *genre* in themselves. The Siddhars of Tamil Nad are men who strove for self-transcendence in spirit individually in total disregard of the standards and laws of a ritual-ridden society; they achieved a fulfilment in the realm of the soul by union with God and attainment of Knowledge of the truths and powers of God; they sounded the trumpet call to their less fortunate brethren to awake to the true significance of life, to the universality of the Truth of God and to place the one paramount need of the soul to realise its innate divinity above all other obligations to man and society. This is not to mean that they were anarchists who preached disorder. On the other hand they commended the efficacy of ethics, ideals of morality and self-culture as factors promoting the growth of godly life and leavening the existence of men and women in the work-a-day world. Man, they declared, is divine in essence; he has Powers in himself of which he is not normally aware. To become conscious of them, to put behind the little life of the senses, tread the path of strenuous discipline to be liberated in the plenitude of the Light and Power of the soul in a realised oneness with the Highest Divine is the main import of their message. To allow no circumstance or consideration to interfere with or impede the progress of the soul till this yogic union is achieved and to care for nothing except for the radiation of the Light and Power so attained is its corollary. The author compares them to the Suffis of Islam and the early Gnostics of Europe,— not, be it noted, to the Antinomians of medievel times.

Attention is drawn to the distinction in the teaching of the Siddhars and other saints, the Alwars of the Vaishnavas and Nayanmars of the Shaivas: "...the differences are not in the fundamentals of their theology or in intensity of devotion to God, but only in their emphasis, methods of approach to God and the forms in which devotion to God should manifest itself.... The Siddhars stress in rough-hewn but powerful Tamil verses the need for each individual to develop his own psychic powers by Yoga and concentration of the mind and see and experience God within himself. If God

could be found and experienced within Man himself, there is no need to go in search of Him to temples or other man-made trysts....The later religious teachers have declared that the observance of certain rituals and practices... are of paramount importance while the Siddhars do not consider these as essential to inner religious life." (Pp. 8-9)

The foremost of these Siddhars is Tirumular, the 'Arch-Siddhar or the supreme mystic and pontiff of Yoga in all Tamil literature'. Leaving aside the usual legendary accounts, nothing definite is known of his life except that he must have come from the north and lived in the fifth or sixth century A.D. His work *Tirumantiram* of over 3,000 verses[1] is considered to be unique in many respects and occupies one-tenth of the entire *Tirumurais*, the Canon of the Shaiva religion in the South. Apart from containing current ideas on Dharma, Polity, Religion and the like, largely from the *Tirukural*, the work is notable for its sections on the practice of Yoga, Siddhis or Powers, Mantras and other branches of Agamic knowledge, in which he has drawn upon existing Sastras and on his own personal experience and knowledge of the truths of inner life. All the portions of this valuable treatise, however, could not be made intelligible as these concepts and truths have been clothed in a symbolism which is obscure to the later generations.

The use of symbols, especially, numerals, to express spiritual verities has been adopted by the Tamil mystic poets, even as the Seers of the Veda resorted to another imagery in their hymns, to guard the occult lore from the eye of the profane and abuse by the ignorant. The author points out : "When the word *five* is used, it may mean the five senses, or the five elements or the five *prāṇams* or the five sacred letters or the five *Murtis* and so on which has to be inferred from the context. Similarly for every numeral

[1] All the verses have been written in the same metre, "a kind of simple and short *Viruttam* metre. In the command over this peculiar metre and in making it a fit instrument for his poetry and thought, Tirumular has shown a genius of exceptional vitality. It is one of the wonders of Tamil literature that this entire work of over three thousand stanzas is in the same metre which is handled with such skill that want of variety does not result in a sense of oppressive monotony. Though the subject of the poem is dryly intellectual and mystic, packed with heavy thought in a maze of symbolism, the poetic style of the Tirumantiram has, on the whole, a rugged simplicity, a vigour and a new tone an use of words, which have added to the richness of Tamil poetry. Tirumular is a master of the apt, short and winged word. No other Tamil poet, who has written on such a scale, has a larger proportion of the best." (Pp. 30-31.)

And yet, it was Tirumular who pioneered the movement of using the speech of the common man—an innovation which was continued by the later Siddhars.

there are several meanings....Another factor that causes difficulty in understanding, if not obscurity, is the wide variety in the symbolism used. For, God, the human body, and the human soul have been represented in a multiple symbolism." Due to this difficulty the most important part of the work yet remains to be unravelled. But from the portions that have been interpreted, it is clear that the Poem is a masterpiece in which the Four Ways of Liberation, Jnana, Karma, Bhakti and Yoga have been integrated in a manner that fully justifies the title of Tirumular as the greatest Siddhar in Tamil literature.

His teaching is notable for another feature; we are happy to read: "Tirumular does not favour that type of Yoga which leads to mortification of the body. Unlike later Siddhars he does not consider the human body to be evil in itself. On the other hand he values the human body as a fit and suitable instrument for the soul in its career of self-discipline and search for God. In one place he calls this body itself the temple of God." (*Tirumantiram* 724. 1823) And indeed it is so. In truth, the body is as much a creation of God as is the soul. The difference between them is only one of degree of the self-formation of the one Spirit. The Divine has shaped the soul as its centre of manifestation and built the body as its vibrant vehicle for the reception and projection of its powers and glories. Hence the body too has its claim in the perfection and liberation that is aimed at. Like the mind and the soul, the human body also is to be cultivated, processed and energised in order that it may effectively participate in the spiritual progression and become a plastic instrument for the expression of the realised Divinity.

The author notes that Tirumular refers to Shiva or Nandi, the Highest Power realised by him, as a dazzling Effulgence and observes: "The conception is metaphorically an apt one as Light always dispels darkness and ignorance, which are said to stand in the way of Man's attempt at self-realisation or union with God. Probably in the trances and visions of the mystics, God is seen as a Mighty and moving blaze of light." It is not a metaphor; it is a fact of spiritual experience that the Divine Truth reveals itself, to the inner vision of the seeker, in the form of Light. For the characteristic form of the Higher Truth or Power is spiritual Light of which the physical light is a material expression. It may be mentioned here that the Rishis of the Veda speak of the Highest Manifestation of the Divine as the Supreme Sun —*uttamam jyotiḥ*—of whom the solar orb of our universe is a physical symbol.

Citing a number of verses in the original to illustrate the excellence of

the work, its profundity, poetic beauty and melody, variety of symbolism, Mr. Aiyer ranks Poet Tirumular with Manikkavasakr and Nammalwar and adds : "He lacks the former's melody and finish in form, but has his easy command over language. He also lacks the latter's depth of ideas and sweep of imagination, but has his terseness and power of expression. In the wide range of his symbolism Tirumular may be said to excel both."(P. 25)

The book then gives a short account of three other Siddhars, Sivavakkiyar[1] who posits the supreme Divine Power above both Shiva and Vishnu,[2] Pattinathar, the most widely read of the Siddhars and Bhadragiri —all of whom lived in what is known as the Hymnal Period, 6 to 10 A.D.

This is followed by a chapter on the later Siddhars in the 16th and 17th centuries when there was another burst of revolt against the newly consolidated orthodoxy and scolasticism. Much less is known about the personal lives of these later celebreties, even their names deriving from some significant expressions used in their works.[3] Brief accounts are given of the works of Pambatti Siddhar, Idaikattu Siddhar, Ahappey Siddhar, Kudambai Siddhar, Kaduveli Siddhar and Aluhunni Siddhar. The author, however, is inclined to rate their contribution to Tamil literature much lower than that of the earlier giants.

The author, Mr. Aiyer, is a genuine connoisseur of *belles lettres*. Amidst masses of obscurity and archaism his keen eye detects gems of beauty and he is eager to share his discoveries with the reader. This short account succeeds in its objective viz. to create interest in the literature and work of the Siddhars, a subject which has not received adequate attention so far in modern studies. Perhaps the present essay could be more intensive in some parts than it has been. His final estimate of the Siddhars is both happy and just :

[1] The author takes up the controversy whether Siddhar Sivavakkiyar and the famous Tirumalisai Alwar are one and the same person. He argues with considerable force in support of the old tradition that Sivavakkiyar is the very same Saivite Siddhar who later became famous as Tirumalisai Piran, the Vaishnava Alwar.

[2] கருமை செம்மை வெண்மைக் கடந்து நின்ற காரணம்
அரியுமல்ல, அரனுமல்ல, அப்புறத்தில் அப்புறம்
பெரிதல்ல, சிறியதல்ல, பற்றுமின்கள் பற்றுமின்
துரியமும் கடந்து நின்ற தூர தூர தூரமே.—10 Page 45

[3] For instance the Siddhar known as Pambatti Siddhar (Snake charmer) after the symbolism of the snake he uses to denote the human soul and the expression '*aadu pambe* (do thou dance, Snake). P. 64.

"The Siddhars have made a permanent and varied contribution to Tamil literature and have enriched it. They introduced into Tamil poetry not only the common speech but also an easy and flexible style woven out of it. The Siddhars were votaries of true religion and noble philosophy. Being men given to Yoga and meditation they underwent long spells of contemplative silence and moods of concentration. Their poetry was subsidiary to their religious life. There is not the impress of the consciously developed art in it. They appear to have sung when they chose to....Their teachings about the existence of the one supreme God and the need for a feeling of identity with and faith in Him, the absolute equality of all irrespective of caste or creed and the need for each individual to develop his inner life by spiritual effort, to know and realise God have a great value at the present time..."

One word before we conclude. The author notes at the end:

"One cannot predict with equal certainty about the practical value of their Yogic teachings and mystical knowledge about the development of the latent powers of Man by Yoga and discipline. The scientific spirit of the times rules out worthwhile future for them, though, perhaps, stray individuals here and there may treasure them and practise them like lone wanderers in a strangely fascinating realm. As for the spiritual yearning after God, that is an eternal quest. There will always be persons engaged in it..."

We are afraid the author makes an unnecessarily rigid distinction between the development of the latent faculties in man and the spiritual evolution of his being. For truly speaking, there is no inconsistency between the evocation and full maturing of all the powers with which one is endowed and the outflowering of the soul into Union with the Divine; one can be a part and expression of the other. The Powers are there in the being as potential means for an all-sided manifestation of the Soul which presides over them. Their fullness is part of the total realisation or perfection of man. It is not accurate, either, to say that the culture and development of these faculties—powers which are not overtly active but nevertheless inherent in the being—has no future in this age of Science. On the other hand, the birth and advance of the new Sciences of para-psychology, telepathy etc. initiates and promises a new career for this line of human effort

although the approach of these empirical sciences is different from that of the old. The frontiers of Knowledge are expanding at an incredible speed and it is not going to be long before what is occult today becomes part of the patent tomorrow.

M. P. PANDIT

(2)

A Survey of Buddhism by *Bhikshu Sangharakshita*. Publishers : The Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore 4. 1957.

This book gives in just 500 pages a wonderfully clear exposition of the different schools of Buddhism. The fact that the author is an English Bhikshu gives an added interest to the work. Its main object is to show the fundamental unity of Buddhism in its two forms, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. This unity, however, according to the author, is not a conceptual unity imposed by the intellect, but a spiritual experience, namely, the Enlightenment. The rules of the Sangha, even the various metaphysical theories, such as that of Dependent Origination, possess for him only a relative and instrumental value. Thus, he says (p. 210), "The unity of Buddhism consists in the fact that, through differences and divergences innumerable, all schools of Buddhism aim at Enlightenment, at reproducing the spiritual experience of the Buddha. The Dharma is therefore to be defined, not so much in terms of this or that particular teaching, but rather as the sum total of the means whereby that experience may be attained." He further goes on (p. 214) : "Unlike the followers of certain non-Buddhist religious traditions, the spiritual heirs of the Enlightened One have as a whole clearly understood that not only the various observances comprising Morality, not only the different practices which constitute meditation, but even the whole of these doctrinal formalities which are—not indeed Wisdom itself but—the conceptual indications of Wisdom, possess not an absolute, but only a relative and instrumental value....All Buddhist schools, whether of the Mahāyāna or the Hīnayāna, were concerned not with the theoretical determination of truth as an end in itself, but with its practical realisation in life. What divided them, therefore, was not differences of opinion over what was true and what untrue in the scientific, descriptive sense of that term—for all agreed that truth being indescribable was a matter for per-

sonal experience,—but differences regarding which doctrines, as well as which ethical observances and which meditational techniques, could in practice function as the means for the attainment of Enlightenment." He illustrates his remarks by the Parable of the Raft. Just as the raft is of use only for crossing the river, but after crossing the river, one does not put it on one's head but puts it aside, so the doctrines and ethical observances have only an instrumental and not an absolute value. The really essential thing in Buddhism is the realization of Enlightenment : all else is relative and non-essential, and all schools of Buddhism, no matter how divergent their doctrines may be, are united in this, that they look upon the realization of Enlightenment as the goal of philosophy. This point the author has very nicely elaborated with a wealth of illustration. Our only comment is that this does not serve to distinguish Buddhism from other systems of Indian philosophy, for in most of these also the goal is the realization of Moksha.

But it is not only the realization of Enlightenment that is placed by the author above concepts, but everything connected with Buddhism is, according to him, to be grasped from the extra-conceptual standpoint. This is particularly so in the case of its logic. Take, for instance, the logic of contradiction. Here, as the author shows, the most distinguishing feature of Buddhism lies in its revelling in contradictions. He quotes the Prajñāpāramitā literature, and says, (p. 218), "Accordingly, we find the Prajñāpāramitā literature rejecting Formal Logic and revelling in a mystifying and bewildering 'logic of contradiction', which, to a mind suckled at the breast of a Barbara, Celarent and Darii, will seem like the nightmare ravings of a lunatic logician. The Law of Identity states that A is A, the Law of Contradiction that A cannot be both B and not-B, the Law of Excluded Middle, that a thing must be either B or not-B, but the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the truth relating to Perfect Wisdom, declares: "Beings, beings, O Subhuti, as no-beings have they been taught by the Tathāgata. Therefore, they are called "beings". Symbolically, A is B, because it is not B. In the dimension of Emptiness, wherein the Bodhisattva courses with a coursing which is a non-coursing, and when he cognizes the Truth by means of a cognition which is a non-cognition, contradictory terms are identical. So long as the mind oscillates between contradictory statements, trying to determine which of them is true and which is false, the aspirant remains immured within the mundane, but no sooner does he embark upon a bold identification of opposites, than, by-passing the intellect, he disappears

from the phenomenal plane and reappears in the Transcendental, in the domain of Emptiness."

The doctrinal differences existing among the various schools of Buddhism the author does not deny, but he says that they "ought to delight rather than dismay us, for we are thereby strung into keener awareness of the limitations of the intellect, startled into livelier recognition of the purely instrumental nature of the Dharma, and at last awakened into a clearer comprehension of the great truth that, as Buddha Himself said repeatedly, Nirvana is *attakkavācara*, beyond the reach of reasoning".

This is the background against which the doctrinal differences of the different schools of Buddhism are to be understood. One of the main doctrinal differences between the Hīnayāna in its two forms of Śrāvakayāna and Pratyekabuddhayāna, and Mahāyāna or Bodhisattvayāna, lies in the individualistic view of Enlightenment of the former, as contrasted with the cosmic view of Enlightenment of the latter. The author has unmistakably shown his preference for the latter. This cosmic view has been beautifully expressed by Śāntideva and quoted by our author on p.456 of his book. We quote below some paragraphs from Śāntideva's statement which voices the spirit which inspires the devotee who prepares himself taking the Thought of Enlightenment:

"Whatever Good I have acquired by doing all this, may I (by that Merit) appease and assuage all the pains and sorrows of all living beings!

May I be like unto a healing drug for the sick! May I be the physician for them, and tend them till they are whole again!

.....

May I be the protector of the helpless! May I be the guide of wayfarers! May I be like unto a boat, a bridge and a causeway for all who wish to cross (a stream)! May I be a lamp for all who need a lamp! May I be a slave to all who want a slave! May I be a bed for all who need a bed! May I be for all creatures a *cintāmaṇi* (the philosopher's stone) and a *bhadraghaṭa* (a vessel from which a lottery is drawn, a pot of fortune), even like unto an efficacious rite of worship and a potent medicinal herb! May I be for them a *kalpavṛkṣa* (the wish-fulfilling tree) and a *kāma-dhenu* (the cow yielding all desires)!"

(*Bodhicaryāvātara*, III. 6-19, Har Dayal's translation)

The author has also devoted one section to Vajra-yāna (Tāntrika Buddhism) in his chapter on The Mahāyāna Schools. The connection of Tāntrika Buddhism with the Mahāyāna schools he has thus explained:

"The Tantra represents, among the Mahāyāna schools, the Faculty of Vigour, traditionally defined as consisting in the maintenance and production of wholesome, and the elimination and obstruction of unwholesome states of mind....Consequently, the dominating interest of the Tantra is not theoretical but practical. In default of the systematic practice of Meditation, the Mādhyamika doctrine, though indicating Absolute Truth, has sunk into scholasticism. The Yogācārin emphasis on Meditation, though originally a protest against this one-sidedness, ultimately met the same fate, being understood to mean not the actual attainment of dhyāna but a theoretical, not to say speculative, interpretation of existence in the light of experience." (p. 407)

The book is undoubtedly one of the best books on Buddhism we have come across. It deals very lucidly and very comprehensively with all schools of Buddhism and what is of greater significance, it shows the fundamental unity of Buddhism in all its forms. It serves eminently the purpose of a very good textbook on Buddhism, and it should be in every University library and all important public libraries. The only thing the book lacks is an index, which we hope will be added when a second edition is printed.

S.K.MAITRA

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